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## THE EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY

*Mike Heath*

Built to serve cotton mills in the Irwell Valley, the Manchester, Bury and Rossendale Railway was established in 1844, becoming the East Lancashire Railway two years later. That title lasted until 1859 when the company was absorbed into the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. However the name lives on as the preservation society that has restored the section from Bury to Rawtenstall in the heart of Rossendale at the northern end of the Irwell Valley, and to Heywood in an easterly direction. The line passes over high viaducts, through long tunnels and along a wonderfully varied countryside where a legacy of industrial architecture is set amongst a landscape of busy market towns, quiet riverside woodland and grazing meadows, with rugged moorland fells above. In a relatively short preservation lifetime, assisted by the local authorities, the Society has reopened these lines, restored or totally rebuilt the infrastructure and created an attractive 12-mile long preserved railway. They have also attracted a great variety of steam locomotives to haul their trains including the world famous 'Flying Scotsman.'

Living only a few miles from Bury, Mike Heath has been able to make regular visits to record the line at work, and many of the locomotives that have visited, throughout all seasons, day and night. In his latest photographic journey he has sought to show the reasons for the railway's success and introduce those unfamiliar with the area to the wonderfully varied landscape that surrounds it.



For over twenty-five years **Mike Heath** has enjoyed combining his hobbies of photography and visiting preserved railways all over Britain, amassing a vast collection of stunning photographs. For this, his fourth book in Halsgrove's Railway Moods series, he has stayed close to home to introduce us to the East Lancashire Railway and take us on a personal photographic journey along the scenic Irwell Valley in the heart of his native county.



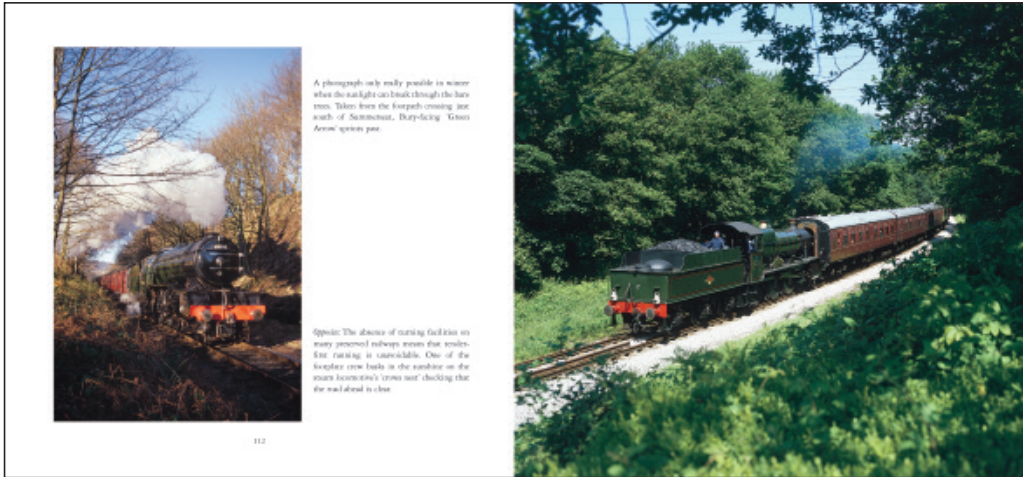
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THE GALLERY – THE EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY



Example of a double page spread.



With the line running north-south at this location, a low winter's afternoon sun affords the opportunity to capture the train in silhouette as it crosses the bridge.



Above: The line climbs towards an overbridge which carries the original Bury to Haslingden turnpike road. This is a favourite viewpoint for photographers.

Left: Once a year the role of the railways in wartime is commemorated with a weekend of events.



In superb lighting at dusk the National Railway Museum's 'Duchess of Hamilton' simmers on shed at the end of a day's work.