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## RAILWAY MOODS THE FFESTINIOG RAILWAY

Cliff Thomas

The 1ft 11½ins gauge Ffestiniog Railway is a line of immense historic significance. Originally built to transport slate from the quarries around Blaenau Ffestiniog to the harbour at Porthmadog it was both hugely successful and renowned worldwide for innovation.

By 1950, however, it was a scene of dereliction – until enthusiasts gained control. Today it is a major tourist attraction and most would agree is the leading preserved narrow gauge railway in Britain – while continuing with its record of innovation including the construction of new locomotives. The Ffestiniog Railway holds major gala events and is visited by many locomotives from other railways. All of this variety and colour is captured within the pages of this magnificent book, continuing over 140 full-colour images. Not the least of its glories is the peerless landscape through which the route runs, from the top of a mile-long sea wall, through the hills of Snowdonia and skirting the rooftops of houses as it approaches the slate town of Blaenau. This is contrasted with glimpses behind the scenes in the line's workshops.

The Ffestiniog Railway is now in the midst of a task arguably more massive than its own revival as it leads the reconstruction of a long-defunct neighbour, the Welsh Highland Railway. A section of the book examines this huge project, bringing the Ffestiniog Railway story bang-up-to-date.



**Cliff Thomas** worked for several years as Heritage Railways' News Editor for the former magazine *Railway World*, and in early 2001 he joined the team of contributors to *The Railway Magazine* for which he reports on standard and narrow gauge steam news and is a feature writer. He has also written on the current narrow gauge scene for *Narrow Gauge World* since issue 1 of that title and is the editor of the *NGmodelling* section of that title. His photographic and written work has also appeared on a freelance basis in a wide range of other magazines and publications.

His previous books include *The Whipsnade and Umfolozi Railway* and *The Great Whipsnade Railway*, *The Narrow Gauge in Britain and Ireland* and the critically acclaimed *Quarry Hunslets of North Wales*. Cliff has been an Executive Committee member and Director of the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway for many years and is the founding Chairman of the Greensand Railway Museum Trust.



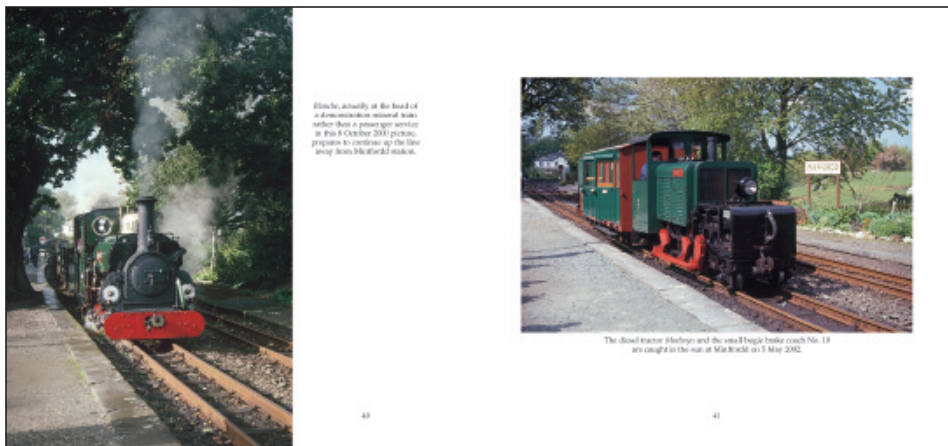
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## THE GALLERY – RAILWAY MOODS: THE FFESTINIOG RAILWAY



Example of a double page spread.



The morning of 8 October 2000 was magical as locomotives crossed the Cob from Boston Lodge to Harbour station.



While the FR has paid staff, volunteers are the lifeblood of the railway.



Awaiting his turn on Gwyndy Bank on 2 May 1999 is Prince, as a van demonstrates that the loading gauge for bridges over lanes is as confined as that for locos working on the FR.



The black-liveried trio of Lilla, Mountaineer and Linda make a fine sight as they reach the Boston Lodge end of the Cob in company on 5 May 2003.



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