

SPIRIT OF THE EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY

Mike & Karl Heath

The Manchester, Bury and Rossendale Railway was established in 1844 to serve the cotton mills in the Irwell Valley. Two years later it became the East Lancashire Railway and that title lasted until 1859 when the company was absorbed into the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Today 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 re-opened these lines, restored or totally rebuilt the infrastructure and created an attractive 12-mile long preserved railway that has attracted a great variety of steam locomotives, from all over the country, to haul their trains.

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 pocket size album 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.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

For well over 25 years **Mike Heath** has enjoyed combining his hobbies of photography and visiting preserved railways all over Britain. In that time he has amassed a vast collection of stunning photographs covering all aspects of the railways across all four seasons, day and night.

From a very early age his younger son **Karl**, now 23, has shared his enthusiasm for both steam and photography and has himself built up an equally impressive portfolio. Having already produced nine titles in the Halsgrove Railway Series including *The Llangollen Railway*, published in 2005 Mike has joined forces with his son to produce this pocket-format book portraying the only operational heritage railway in North Wales.

HALSGROVE CATALOGUE

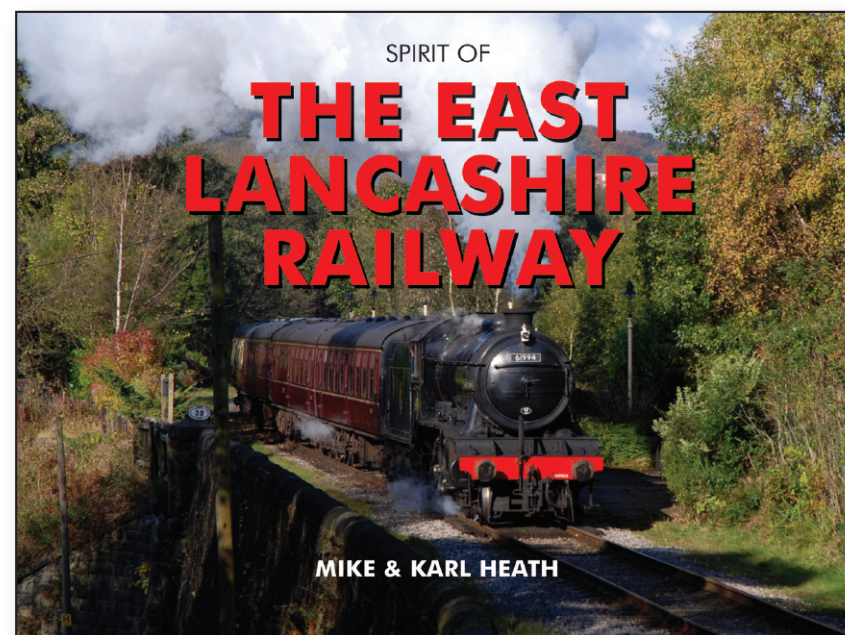
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Leaving the viaduct behind 45407 continues up the valley towards Ramsbottom.



The crew of 76079 look on as the station master gives the guard of this Heywood-bound train permission to 'green flag' departure to Heywood.



Snow in the valley as Great Western Railway Hall class No. 4936 'Kinlet Hall', a visitor from Tyseley, makes its way to Rawtenstall.



Reached in September 2003 Heywood is the current eastern terminus of the line. The journey begins with British Railway Standard 4 tank 2-6-4 No. 80098, a popular visitor from the Midland Railway Centre, easing a train out on a bright March morning in 2009.



Ex-LMS 'lirty' No. 47324 a mainstay of services, since emerging from restoration, attacks the 1 in 80 gradient of Broadfield Bank out of Bury with a service for Heywood.



Early morning freights are a feature of gala weekends. In April 2009 the standard tank charges through Burrs Country Park at 8am.



No. 61994 'The Great Marquess' makes a spirited departure from Summerseat with a Heywood-bound service as the surrounding trees show the first colours of autumn 2008.

Example of a double-page spread.