



On Track: Henry Gittins - Railway Pioneer in Siam and Canada

Paul Gittins

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Henry Gittins, born in 1858, went to Canada as a young adventurer where he started his career as a railway engineer. In 1885 he joined a survey team in Siam, aiming to develop a national railway system. He spent thirty-three years there, progressing to the highest position in the Siamese Railway Department. Among his many achievements was the discovery of Hua Hin and his heroic construction of the Southern Railway Line, which opened up the southern peninsula to travel and development.

During his time in Siam, he kept a series of diaries which not only give a first-hand account of the difficult and dangerous conditions surrounding the construction of railways at that time, but also a fascinating picture of the emergence of Siam (now Thailand) into the modern world.

On Track is an affectionate tribute from the author to the grandfather he never met but who he got to know and appreciate through the diaries that were his legacy.

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