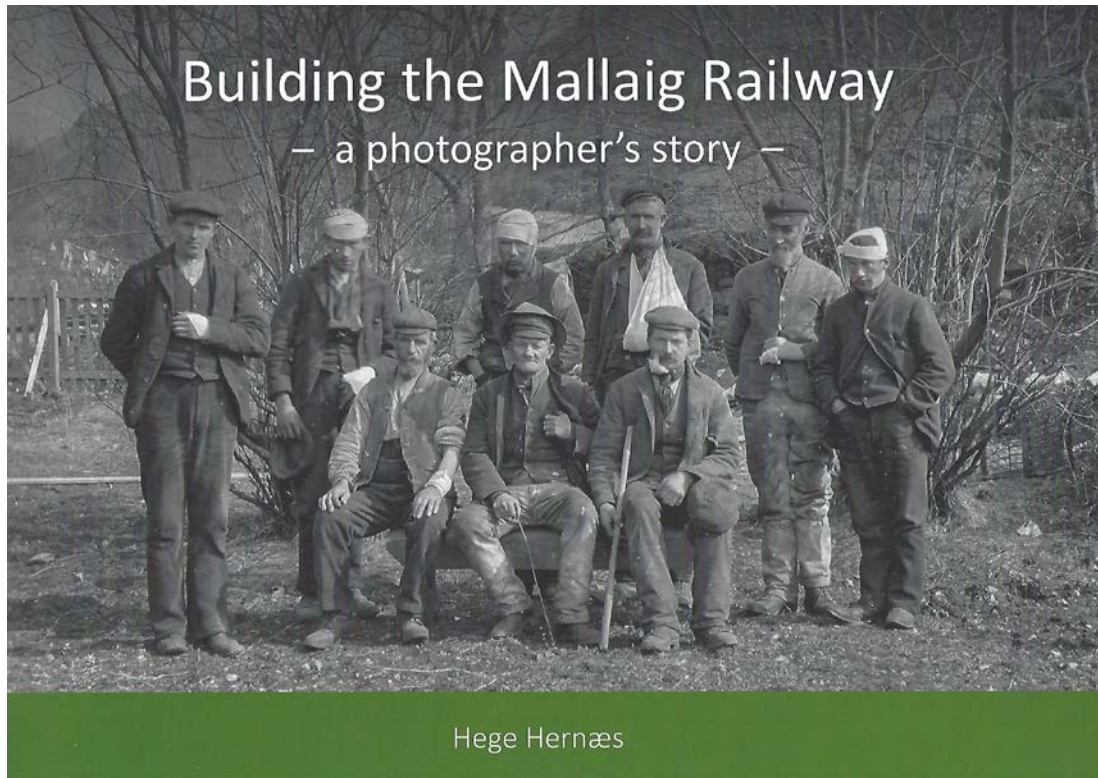


Book Review nr 26

It has been some time since I have reviewed books, but after a long rest I intend to recommence with this unusual book.



In April 2022 we went with the grandchildren to Glenfinnan for a short break to see the viaduct and ride on the Jacobite steam train from Fort William to Mallaig. Glenfinnan is a small village, about 20 houses, with a railway station which has been transformed into a museum. Although the grandchildren weren't interested, I paid the museum a visit and was surprised at the number of young ladies waiting on the platform for the Jacobite. Speaking to the museum manager, John Barnes, he explained that the Harry Potter effect means Glenfinnan now gets 400,000 visitors a year.

I had a look round the museum which is very compact and was lacking a good example of a locomotive which ran on the line. The largest available was an OO gauge Glen. After a chat with John it was agreed I would loan my 5" Glen as an exhibit, which I delivered in November 2023. I will write an article on that later in the year.

When I delivered the loco John gave me a copy of a newly published book, **Building the Mallaig Railway**, which was written by his wife Hege Hernæs. This is not the usual railway history book.

In 2017 Michael Holden, a collector of historic photographs, acquired a batch of some 240 unlabelled cellulose nitrate negatives from an auction house in Cornwall. Michael managed to match one negative to a part photo on the museum website. Having processed more he suspected that many photos may relate to the construction of the West Highland Line. The outcome of much research through railway archives and identifying where the photographs were taken has led to a good read with a bit of mystery. The mystery is, who took these photos. As can be seen from the cover this book really is a social history treasure regarding the construction of railways in the Victorian era.

If you want to borrow this, or any book in the library, please contact me.

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Remember we would welcome members' views on any books they borrow.

Clive Reynolds. April 2024