

Alexander Matheson

The Railway King of the Highlands

Written by Anne-Mary Paterson and Neil T Sinclair. 64pp, 274 by 215mm portrait, 55 colour and black & white photographs plus 6 maps and drawings. ISBN: 978-0-9927311-3-7. Price £10.00.

In the Victorian period Sir Alexander Matheson was a major figure in the development of the Highlands. Using great wealth gained in the Far East, including from the now controversial opium trade, he bought and improved estates which stretched from coast to coast in his native Ross-shire and in Inverness, where new streets changed the face of the town. Alexander spearheaded the construction of railway lines from Inverness. Without his support the Highland Railway system would have grown far more slowly.

Alexander spent about half his year at his houses in Ross-shire. The other half was in London was when Parliament was sitting, as he was an MP for Highland constituencies for 37 years. He was also a major figure in the business life of the City and a director of the Bank of England.

This book looks at several aspects of Alexander's life, including his family. It also explains, for the first time, how his vast fortune vanished in the years immediately before and after his death.

Copies of the book can be obtained from bookshops or by post from the Highland Railway Society at £12.00 (inc P&P). Go to www.hrsoc.org.uk or post a cheque made payable to the Highland Railway Society to HRS Sales 31 Brackley Lane, Abthorpe, Towcester, NN12 8QJ, email sales@hrsoc.org.uk. Trade orders are welcome and given the usual discounts.

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