

# HARAKEVET

# הרכבת

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A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East  
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29:1 A Syrian (CFS) Phosphate train, hauled by LDE 2800.244, on the Palmyra - Damascus line near Basin. 1st June 1990. (Photo: Peter Nothdurft)

## EDITORIAL

It's mid-June 1995, and as yet I have no new address or information to offer subscribers - so it is time to get the June issue out ! It's "business as usual" for now, and until further notice.

I am glad to say that almost every subscriber for series 7 has renewed, and there is some new interest as well. Material continues to flow in - in this issue we include the first of a veritable atlas of track plans sent in by Paul Cotterell, and a lot of comments on material already published. Magnificent pictures from the Turkish period together with lengthy journey accounts from the Second World War. It is clear that the railways of the Middle East are going from strength to strength, and we hope that 'Harakevet' will mirror this progress !

Again, I crave indulgence for the fact that several type faces are used again - at least you can see which items have been typed and printed recently and which come from 'the file'. This will alas continue until what can be used from the file has been finished. Enjoy !



29:3: Light shunting duties at Qishon Works are carried out by this Ford tractor fitted with flanged wheels and buffing gear; seen in the north yard on 2nd. March 1989. (Paul Cotterell).

### 29:4. NEWS FROM THE LINE.

a). A Fruitful Encounter. At 1507 on 1/3/95 the through train 7 from Haifa to Rehovot, made up of an IC3 set, was approaching its destination when it hit a lorry loaded with fruit on an unguarded minor level crossing. The truck driver and several passengers were injured, but the train driver was able to beat a retreat from his exposed position in the cab. [The cabs have a special button which open the connecting to the door to the passenger saloon very quickly in an emergency. Ed.] The IC3 was derailed and damaged. The line was eventually cleared ten hours later and the IC3 set was worked back to Haifa where it arrived at 0500.

b). More Doubling. Double track on the section Hadera West - Kfar Vitkin was brought into use as from 7/3/95. This means that there is now double track continuously between Binyamina and Tel Barukh.

c). Sins of Sodom. 'Yediot Aharonot' on 16/3/95 reported a visit made by the Minister of Transport to the Dead Sea Works at Sodom during which the Manager of the Dead Sea Works said that, in his opinion, there was no economic justification for building a railway from Sodom to Eilat. In addition it was reported that the Volkswagen company of Germany were interested in building a magnesium processing factory at Sodom. The magnesium would be used in the construction of 3 million VW cars. Cause and effect ?

d). Communication by Cable. On the same day 'Yediot' reported that Kibbutz Mevo Hama, situated on the Golan Heights and overlooking the Sea of Galilee, intended to build a cableway down to the hot water springs at Hamat Gader (El Hamma). This would cross the old Hedjaz Railway line and, since Israel Railways "intends to operate again the railway line between Irbid in Jordan and Haifa", it may be necessary to build a tunnel. Negotiations are said to be continuing.

e). More Statistics For the Future. From "Lloyds List" of 25/3/95 (thanks to Albert Thomas) comes the following optimistic account by Thomas Land:

"Israel's ports of Haifa, Ashdod and Eilat are to be developed and expanded in a 5-year, \$3bn. infrastructure programme. The scheme is accompanied by a \$1bn. railway building plan. The tracks will eventually link Israel with four of its Middle East neighbours.....

...There are also long-term plans for high-speed railway links between

Israel and Jordan as well as Egypt and, eventually, Lebanon and Syria.

For the medium-term, IPRA (Israel Ports & Railways Authority) has just unveiled its "Rakevet 2000" railway development plan designed to create the capacity to carry 25m passengers and 10m tons of cargo a year.

The new railway lines will be developed mainly in the metropolitan areas along the Mediterranean coastline and following the old track from Tel Aviv to Beersheba, while a new line will be laid between a planned new city at Modi'in and Ben-Gurion Airport.

By the turn of the century, the number of seats on Israeli trains is expected to increase from 6,788 to 12,200, the total track length from 563 to 674 miles and the number of stations from 67 to 74."

f). New Logo. IR has adopted a new logo for future use on stations, rolling stock etc. - a two-tone blue on a white background. It comprises a stylized track-with-junction symbol (cf. the BR "double-arrow" or the NS 'kinked track' logos), with the words "Rakevet Yisrael" in Hebrew slanting to the left in thick, rounded letters. According to IR spokesman Avi Hefetz it "symbolizes movement, strength and renewal".

g). The Phoney War. As part of the deregulation of services, it has suddenly hit the rulers of Israel that there is nothing to stop private telecommunication firms trying to squeeze the state-run 'Bezek' out of public areas. Shulamit Aloni, the Communications Minister, has therefore introduced rules to ensure that minimum levels of public Bezek card-operated telephones are available in various public facilities - including at least four phones in every railway station. (The mind boggles at the thought of tiny halts such as Bustan Hagalil being so endowed...)

h). Another Casualty. On 27/2/95 a Jerusalem woman was struck by a train after sitting on the tracks there and refusing to get up even when passers-by pleaded with her to do so. The train hit her at 3.30pm., and she was taken to Hadassah hospital "in serious condition".

i). More on the Tel Aviv Network. From various reports received (e.g. Jer. Post 10/1/95, 14/2/95) Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar appears serious about the Tel Aviv-Petah Tikva-Kfar Sava suburban system; approval for "planning to begin" was given 13/2/95, and details given include: Travel times to Tel Aviv of 12 minutes and 24 minutes respectively from Petah Tikva and Kfar Sava; trains every 15 minutes in rush hour [why so few? Surely 5-minute headways are quite feasible? Ed.]; the project will involve

30km. of double track and 8 stations, the trains should carry 8,400 passengers an hour in peak periods and 17 M per year.

Regarding the 'Underground': Various articles and op-ed pieces have been sent by different correspondents. All tend to regurgitate the same basic press-release material. The Tel Aviv Metropolitan Area Rapid Transit System (TAMAR) team was established in Nov. 1994 under Ilik Rozanski, to co-ordinate a mass-transit solution to Tel Aviv's terrible traffic problems. The two companies chosen to carry out preliminary consultancy work have a great deal of experience in various cities - Parsons-Brinckerhoff in Hong Kong, Djakarta, Taipei, Bangkok, Atlanta, San Francisco and Los Angeles; Sofretu in Paris, Toulouse and Cairo. Parsons will be in charge of technical and financial feasibility studies, and Sofretu will handle rolling-stock aspects.

j). Ess, Ess, Mein Kind. Two items on food:

- From March, IR has reinstated its refreshment trolley service "on all trains", though our gallant reporter (Sybil) hasn't yet checked out if this includes the Jerusalem trains, very much the poor relation.

- A privately-owned restaurant was due to open in the first week of March, in the former waiting room at Jerusalem station. It's nothing to do with IR, and is presumably merely a tenant - like the restaurant in the old goods shed. According to Sybil "It looks rather high-class, and is to be called 'Haratzif', 'The Platform'. The IR signboards have been moved to the left, and the restaurant's name is placed over the central door. I think it's a great idea - better to find a good use for an historic building than to let it rot for 10 years before pulling it down to make way for offices."

k). Haifa Pedestrian Link. The Haifa Chamber of Commerce in Nov. '94 gave an award to three Architecture students from the Technion for their scheme to improve access between the bottom Carmelit station in Kikar Paris and the suburban railway station in HaNamal St. The scheme includes a pedestrian mall to a proposed commercial centre on the site of an area currently comprising disused warehouses and urine-scented alleyways, and an electromechanical walkway across Derech Haatzmaut. "The total estimated cost is \$9,276 including acquisition and conversion of the disused buildings, electromechanical equipment and civil engineering, with annual operating costs of \$600,000. The cost is thought to be justified by increased safety and convenience for passengers, making travel on both transport systems more attractive, together with increased trade and consumer activity in what is at present an unattractive and unsavoury area." The three

students are Ronen Ram, Rinat Kainan and Daniel Blumfield (who just happens to be the son of Wendy Blumfield, a subscriber !)

l). Knocking Copy. In 'Kol Bo' 24/2/95 appeared an article claiming that trains on the Haifa-Tel Aviv line were running consistently up to 20 minutes late; an IR spokesman claimed only 7% of trains were late. The previous week passengers holding reserved seat tickets for coaches 4, 5 & 6 of the midday Haifa - TA train found to their dismay that three coaches of their train 'had been left at Tel Aviv'.

m). More derailments. 'Yediot Aharonot' for 31/1/95 had a story and picture of a derailment of five acid-tank wagons (incl. 60 004) at Nevatim the previous afternoon. Apparently there was no dangerous spillage.

n). Loco Sold. Esslingen shunter 211 was sold to the National Transport Institute in Tel Aviv in February 1995.

o). IC3's. According to Tom Birch IR have ordered several further IC3 sets, but to an altered technical specification - to drive the air-conditioning from a single engine.

p). New Timetables. A nicely-printed multi-colour 22-page (plus illustrated cover) "Summer 1995" timetable booklet was issued by IR with services from 1st. April 1995 until further notice. IC3 services are again printed in red, with notes in blue. Other features - trains to Tel Aviv have a blue heading to the pages, trains from Tel Aviv a red heading. (This means trains from Rehovot - i.e. northbound - share the same colour as those from Nahariyya - i.e. southbound.) Also the first four pages have a compressed Tel Aviv - Haifa (Bat Galim & Merkaz) & v.v. main-line table, the fuller tables with all intermediate stops from Nahariyya being separated to pages 5-12; Haifa-Nahariyya and v.v. services get a separate page (pp.13-14) to themselves, Netanya-Tel Aviv suburban services a separate table (pp.15-18), T.A. - Rehovot services are on pp. 19-20, and the daily Jerusalem train sits forlornly on pp.21-22. (For some reason the colour code for these page headings is reversed.) The booklet is bilingual Hebrew/English, of course, and makes a very nice impression.

q). Belgian Coaches ? According to a Belgian railway magazine ("Spoor Journaal") a large number of redundant M2 (or M3 ?) coaches have been sold to Israel. We reported this some time ago, (27:4:g) but have heard

nothing since. What is happening ?

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#### 29:5. NOTES AND CORRECTIONS.

a). The miniature railway at Rishon LeZion has been briefly reported previously: see 18:4(a) and 26:4(w). Details of the locomotive are included in an article in The Narrow Gauge magazine, number 141 of Winter 1994. The article is entitled 'The Pretenders' and was written by Lawson Little. The locomotive is a 'Large' 2-6-0 built in 1987 by Severn Lamb in England, and is in the style of the Rio Grande Railroad locos of the 19th. Century. It was 15 in. gauge and the works number was 71.9.87. This was the third of the 'Large' type to be built. It was displayed at the IAATA conference in New Orleans during November 1987 and then sold to an unknown American operator. The loco was stored, however, near Minneapolis and eventually returned to Severn-Lamb ('model makers to the world'). It was rebuilt and regauged to 60cm., then going to Israel. When rebuilt it was given the new works number 071-2-91. There is an excellent photo of this internal-combustion steam-outline loco when new on p.22 of 'The Narrow Gauge' 141.

b). On 28:4(a), from Theodor Schuchat of Washington DC:

"I spent August 1973 in Israel.....During luncheon at the Jerusalem Khan one day I befriended two attractive young female members of the IDF. They invited us to remain at the Khan "to meet the mayor", and I accepted their invitation. I found myself at a reception for Bill Levitt, builder of Levittown. (The two soldiers, responsible for opening bags etc. at the door, simply admitted me, an uninvited guest.)

The reception was to fete Levitt for having donated funds to restore Mishkenot Sha'ananim. The principal speaker was Richard Crossman MP. Teddy Kollek presided. Afterwards we had an interesting conversation. I mentioned that I had been in Seattle not long before. At once he questioned me about the Monorail, an elevated passenger 'train' built for an exposition to demonstrate new Swedish technology. Specifically, he wanted to know whether the concrete piers and single 'track' blighted the streets beneath.

I assured him that real estate values had not suffered along the Monorail route. (Nor have they to this day). He told me he was interested in obtaining a similar system for Jerusalem "where digging is out of the question." Would the Monorail be visible along the crests of the hills ? he asked. I explained that the cars were at the level of second-storey (U.S.) and thus would not mar the skyline. Now that the skyline was mentioned, I had a

question for the Mayor - When was he going to get rid of the television antennae on the roofs of the Old City? He responded that, when Cable-TV was available, he would first give a tax abatement for removal of rooftop aeriels and then later by ordinance ban their installation.

I would hazard a guess that somewhere in the Jerusalem municipal bureaucracy Teddy Kollek's monorail dream, long dormant, may be stirring at last. The Seattle prototype has never been replicated, to my knowledge, yet it has the further advantage of minimizing imports. Because the cars run on rubber-tired wheels that grip the concrete "roadway", only the vehicles need be imported.

I often ride the monorail, as I spend summers in Seattle. Now that cable-TV has come to Israel, will those antennae finally disappear from the Jerusalem skyline?"

c). On 28:17 - Isaac Nissan's lengthy memoir has created a bit of a stir! Theo Pelz writes that he worked on IR in 1952 and can recall few if any of the names mentioned. Robin Davies adds: "It is clear that Isaac Nissan did not recall many of the Mechanical Dept. people who took up their work at independence. He misses such outstanding people as Moledevan, Gruenberg, Sussman and Gelblum.

It seems to me also that very few people outside the realm of railways realise the way in which the staff on railways were organised. The old PR was organised on a very similar basis to the Great Western Railway in Britain. (Arthur Kirby, of course, was a Great Western man, and proud of it.)"

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#### 29:6. MIDDLE EAST RAILWAY NEWS.

a). Coaches for Iran. From 'Eisenbahn Magazin' 4/95, via Dr. Ernst Schmidt: The Deutsche Bahn has recently sold 100 of its coaches to Iran; the vehicles comprise 50 Am (1st. class) and 50 Bm (2nd. class) compartment coaches of the type formerly used in express trains. The magazine comments "Iran has long been a good customer of second-hand German railway material, and will use these vehicles to 'freshen up' its rolling stock fleet."

[And see below. Ed.]

b). Beirut Visit. Andy Wilson, in a letter of April, comments further on his travels; (See 27:10 & 28:13): At the Beirut depot he spoke to the depot chief, who said that there used to be workshops at the north end of the yard, but these were destroyed by warfare. However, Andy suspects that the

shops area was in fact cleared for motorway construction about the beginning of the civil war period, which then stopped the road work. For whatever reason, it is clear that there is not much available in the way of maintenance facilities for locos and stock. For example, EMD loco 604, described as "scrapped" in 27:10, is still physically present - the term probably means merely "withdrawn", maybe even "cannibalised for parts", though it did not look dismantled in any obvious way.

c). Syrian Observations. Andy then spent the week 25th. Feb. to 4th. March in Syria; this included the holiday at the end of Ramadan, which may have affected the level of freight activity on CFS. He writes:

"My objective was to see what I could of the standard gauge rail system, but this was frustratingly difficult owing to the inconvenient train times - most passenger services operate at night or include a high proportion of running in the dark, and the only decent train ride is Aleppo - Latakia which can be done there and back in the day (and from either end). So - I also travelled by bus and hired a car for two days.

Four s.g. loco types were seen:

1. Soviet model TE114, Co-Co DE, red or blue. These carry cut-out metal letters and numbers in the form DEL 2800 (number). Numbers noted included 205, 280, 406, 412. Others seen but not identified.

2. American-type road switcher, light brownish livery. Presumably the GE machines listed by Hughes. [N.B. Hughes (p.64) lists 30 GE U17C Co-Cos Nos. 301-315 & 351-365, but otherwise states only "Syria also has a large number of diesel locomotives built in Russia and France; full details are not yet available". Ed] One noted at Aleppo in multiple with a TE114. Numbers not noted.

3. Long hood with end cab loco, black or dark grey. Seen on freight duties, from a distance. Not sure of wheel arrangement. Possibly a Czech type. Smaller than the TE114, about G12 size.

4. Small Bo-Bo by CEM (France). These are similar to the units stored at Maan in Jordan and may be the same model. DE104 and DE110 seen at Cadem and another not identified at Aleppo. Green livery. Used for shunting.

I went out to Palmyra (as a dutiful tourist), keeping a sharp eye on the freight-only line from the phosphate workings south-west of there, but nothing was moving owing to the holiday.

Passenger rolling stock is all Germanic modern bogie stock painted either red and cream or light brown and cream. Not sure of the significance of the colour schemes - neither looked newer than the other. Quite a lot of cracked windows; evidently the Hedjaz trains are not the only ones suffering from stone-throwers. Sleeping cars are blue and white, and postal cars are either dark green and cream or green all over.

Some 4- and 6-wheel coaches were noted as engineering vans, quite modern-looking steel bodies but presumably rebuilds on older chassis.

Operational freight stock is all modern-looking, some with Soviet-style couplers. However, there are quite a lot of old wood-bodied vans placed off the line as huts etc. - complete on wheels.

New deviations were noted at several places but the old track appeared to have been left in place; If they are not that keen on dismantling old wagons and tracks, who knows what motive power may still be lurking somewhere ?

On the Hedjaz, the first sight of Damascus Kanawat station was most discouraging - obviously nothing had moved for some time although a policeman assured me that the weekly Amman train was operating. I walked out along the line to Cadem and found that the line was being diverted at a motorway bridge. The diversion appeared to clash with the alignment of one of the slip roads, so maybe it was only a temporary route. Trains were terminating at Cadem.

Between Kanawat and Cadem a road-bed had been prepared in the central reservation of a motorway in a cutting for the planned standard-gauge extension into the city, although it has no track. This extends for about half the required distance.

At Cadem there was quite a bit of activity, with scheduled trains on the standard-gauge and things were also happening on the narrow-gauge, although no train was due for almost 3 days.

On the narrow-gauge, Hartmann 2-8-2 No. 260 was in the workshop with shiny wheels and dripping oil in all the right places, and during my visit it was towed out by one of the Schoema diesels to be turned on the turntable (which they did not have in 1991 - the TEFs tour engine that year had to go all the way to the triangular junction at Deraa to turn !) No. 263 was standing outside, rods off but obviously not derelict.

Romanian diesel 402 was on the servicing pad and was clearly in use - coupler was rubbed bright.

Mazout carrier No. 1810 was still where I had previously seen it. Is it a J & J loco tender or not ? [See photos, Ed.]

The next day, when I had the hire car, I went out to explore the Qatana branch which is out of use, but appeared to be quite easily capable of being made fit for use. The line has good track laid on concrete block sleepers and with colour-light signalling ! There are bridges carrying several roads over the line, although the major road from Damascus towards Quneitra is crossed on the level. The line continues north of Qatana but then enters a military area when I had to turn back. Maybe this is the place referred to in Harakevet 27:13 ? [Unlikely. Ed.]

d). Austrian Involvement. According to AP, 19/2/95, "An Austrian company will conduct a feasibility study on building a railroad between Jordan and Syria, with a branch that would eventually link it to the Israeli network....The kingdom [of Jordan] is seeking to replace the [existing line] with a broad network that would eventually allow direct links with Europe through Syria and Turkey.

Michael Angerer, commercial counsellor at the Austrian Embassy in Jordan, said the Vienna government will finance the \$200,000 study to be conducted by Austrian Rail Engineering, a private company. The study is expected to begin in early March and end before the end of the year.

The proposed project, estimated to cost about \$150M, envisaged a railroad between Amman and the Syrian border, about 60km. (36 miles) north of the Jordanian capital. It will have a 20km (12 miles) westward branch from Zarqa, 27 km. (17 miles) north of Amman, to Irbid, a short distance from the Israeli border. [This] was designed to allow an eventual linkage with the Israeli network that will run to the port of Haifa, thus allowing passenger and cargo traffic to and from the Mediterranean port. Transport Ministry plans also include linking the Jordanian-Syrian railroad with a branch that will run to the Iraqi border, about 300 km. (180 miles) north, at a cost of \$330 M."

Theo Pelz has sent a copy of "Gemeindebrief März und April 1995", p.42, "Nachrichten aus Amman", which adds that the Jordanian Minister of Transport, Samir Kawan, has visited Baghdad to discuss plans for this link with Iraq.

e). Iran News. From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 17 (March/April 1995) p.28: The 770km. long line from Bafq to Bandar Abbas was officially opened on 18th. March 1995.

From 'Today's Railways' No.6, p.55: Following a visit to Italy, Iranian Railways have decided to purchase 10 withdrawn FS DMU sets, each composed of two Class ALn 773 railcars and one Ln 664 trailer.

f). BBC Filming. Your editor was contacted by a BBC researcher recently, who wanted information on current timetables in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan as a camera crew was about to be sent to Damascus in order to produce a film for a new series of 'Great Train Journeys of the World'. In view of what little is known of the current state of the Hedjaz and other lines in the region, it will be a hard task to produce such a film - the BBC may be a year too late - but 'Harakevet' hopes to keep readers informed.

In the meantime another newly-established independent video film producer is hoping to produce a film on Israel Railways and, at the time of preparing this item, was planning a 'scouting trip' before a filming trip in late summer 1995. If this is successful further films on other railways that have not been so well covered to date could be in the offing. Details and review will be provided when appropriate.

g). Hedjaz Tourism. Further to the brief comment in the last issue, the Editor has met with the two consultants who traversed the majority of the Hedjaz and Aqaba lines in Jordan. Full disclosure must await the due etiquette concerning delivery of the full report and commercial confidentiality, but it will be breaking no secrets for those who have visited the Hedjaz lines to report that maintenance standards and track alignments gave cause for concern to those who run similar tourist railways in the U.K., and some refurbishment and revision of procedures would be recommended to those who commissioned the survey.



29:7: Hedjaz Glories. Nippon Pacific 82 (built Japan 1959) heads over a viaduct between Zerka and Ruseima, 9/5/79. (Photo: David Scudamore.)  
Will tourist trains run this way again ?

29:8: A HUNSLET IN HAIFA. By Paul Cotterell.

The accompanying photo is from the Central Zionist Archives, just across from the Central Bus Station in Jerusalem, and I am much obliged to Reuven Koppler who willingly let me make a copy negative of this and other photographs in his care.

The engine is Haifa Harbour Works Department 0-6-OST No. 1, Hunslet 1585 of 1929, and very nice it looks too, practically brand new and posed for the camera beside the small coaling stage at the HHWD loco shed yard. Just beyond No. 1 is the metal-work which supported a water tank, and there is another water tank at a much lower level out of the picture to the right. Nothing now remains of this scene. The whole area around the HHWD loco yard has been asphalted over and forms that part of the port complex between the main breakwater and Gate 10 in Bat Galim, just to the east of Rambam Hospital.

It is evident from this and other photos that the present view was taken in October or November 1929. The angle of the sun indicates that the anonymous photographer pressed the shutter release button at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, so work is almost over for the day and the assembled personages have found a few spare minutes towards the end of their shift for a group portrait.

Work on building Haifa harbour was completed in 1933 and No. 1 is believed to have gone into storage with Epstein Strykowski of Haifa (I know nothing of this contractor). It was later taken over by the British Army in 1941 and went to Egypt. It is recorded as being "written off" in July 1944, but I have no details of its eventual fate.

The Haifa Harbour works and its locomotives were featured in an article in the 'Industrial Railway Record' No. 130, with subsequent correspondence on the subject appearing in issues 132 and 137 of that magazine. Haifa City Archives used to have a most interesting album of old photos taken during the building of the harbour, with many views showing the layout of tracks and trains. This album is, I believe, now at the Israel State Archive ('Ganzach Hamedinah') now located at Mekor Hayyim in Jerusalem.

[In File WO169/1893 at the PRO, Kew, the 1941 War Diary of 199 Rly. Wksp. Coy, R.E., can be found the following on HHWD locos:

- 2/1: 0-6-0 Hunslet ST shunting engines Nos. HHWD 2 & 16 are being prepared for movt. from PWD Yard Haifa to Workshop.
- 5/1. Hunslet 0-6-OST No. 16 (renumbered WD1) moved into Wksp. for repairs & overhaul. Urgent priority given to this work.
- 9/1. WD 1 completed and proceeded under steam to Wadi Sarar with driver & fireman.
- 10/1. Overhaul commenced on Hunslet 0-6-OST No. 2 [Presumably WD No., Ed.] as this engine is urgently needed, priority is given to this overhaul.
- 20/1. HHWD Hunslet 0-6-OST No. 6 worked ex Athlit to shops for repairs. HHWD locos Nos. 1, 4, 7 & 10 have been purchased and worked to the PR shops where they await repairs.

23/1. Repairs completed to WD 2 engine, trials complete and ready for traffic.  
25/7. Repairs to WD 6 completed; loco WD 3 put in hand - casual repair.  
Week 22-27/9. Work in hand includes WD 1. (Work completed 6/12/41.)  
1/12. WD 2 sent (stripped) to Egypt.

In July 1941 the Progress Report (Appendix B5) shows WD 1 at Rafa, WD 3 at Qishon Shops, WD 5 at Wadi Sarar, WD 6 at Al Jiya and WD 7 at Rafa.

For 1942 (File WO169/5292):  
7/2: WD3 taken in. Awaiting boiler exam. by 21/2. Work on this loco continued into May, when WD 4 was also started, though work on this loco was suspended after a fortnight. WD 3 completed 6/6/42. By 21/6 WD 7 was under repair - but the report for 1-5/9 states "WD 7: Scrapped" !  
WD 5 had repairs in 11/42 at Jaffa.

My researches have stopped at the end of 1942 for the time being. Ed.]

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29:9:

### THE OPENING OF THE HBT.

From Mr. Hugh Dovey I have received a photograph taken from the opening train on the Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli Rly. He writes: "The date is 20th. December 1942, and the location is a level crossing between Beirut and Tripoli - i.e. the section built by Australians. Consequently it is an Australian soldier who is presenting arms to General (as he then was) Alexander, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, who was in the driver's cab. The motor-cyclists at the roadside are Military Policemen who would escort the General when he returned to Beirut in one of the staff cars waiting as the train passed. Some of the vehicles further back may be civilian.

As for those on the train: the first from the right is Captain W.R.M. Jones, the Security officer in Tripoli who was responsible for the General's security on the journey. The next one is myself, and I was assisting Captain Jones in his task. I was then serving in a Security Section in Beirut. I was, to use a Wild West stagecoach expression, "riding shotgun" for the General. But it was a Tommy-gun that I had ! The third figure leaning out looks like a Lebanese policeman.

The photograph was taken by Gulbenkian - for some reason most of the Beirut photographers were Armenian. The Opening Train was a formal occasion - the line had been in use for some short time before. I recall there was a lot of worry in case German saboteurs tried to block it."

[My own query is: Bearing in mind the angle of the road crossing - is this the same location as that featured on the cover of issue 28 ? Ed.]





29:10:

DR. BREEN'S DIARY.

From Jacob Wahrman comes a copy of a few pages from "A Diary of My Life in the Holy Land" by Dr. A. E. Breen, described as "Author of 'General Introduction to Holy Scripture' and 'A Harmonised Exposition of the Four Gospels'." He was also an American! A frontispiece photograph of the bearded author dressed in the guise of a Sheikh of Araby does nothing to dispel the fear that here is yet another 'nutter' pouring out his impressions of the quaintness of his travels.

From pages 3-5, describing events of October 1904:

"To the Christian traveller the city [Jaffa] possesses only one place of interest, the traditional site of the house of Simon the Tanner, where St. Peter had the vision mentioned in Acts, X, 9-16. At Jaffa Peter also raised to life Tabitha, but the true site of the event cannot be known.

The house of Simon the tanner is a small dingy modern house, one room of which has been converted into a mosque. Its authenticity is uncertain.

There is a good carriage road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, distance 41 miles. The distance by rail is 54 miles owing to the difficulties of the route.

We left Jaffa by train at 1pm and arrived at the station outside the walls of Jerusalem at about 5pm. The route covers the Plain of Sharon passing close to Ludd or Lydda, and through Ramleh, often following the road over which the Ark of the Covenant was brought from Ekron to Jerusalem.

As our train was standing at the station, I observed that the locomotive was built by the Baldwin Co. of Pennsylvania. This insignificant fact seemed to divest the land of some of its strangeness.

The supply of drinking water of the train was a large black goat skin lying in the aisle. Water was drawn from it by loosing the leathern thong which bound the neck.

The passengers were of many nations, barefooted Arabs, pious Christian pilgrims, adventurers, and despised Jews. In Syria no common bond binds men together. It is a land of human degradation and contempt. There is no patriotism, no national feeling: both the Muhammadan religion and the Turkish rule tend to degrade men. The subjects of the Sultan know that the only interest their rulers have in them is to exact taxes from them. Misrule, ignorance, and poverty have debased nature in them.

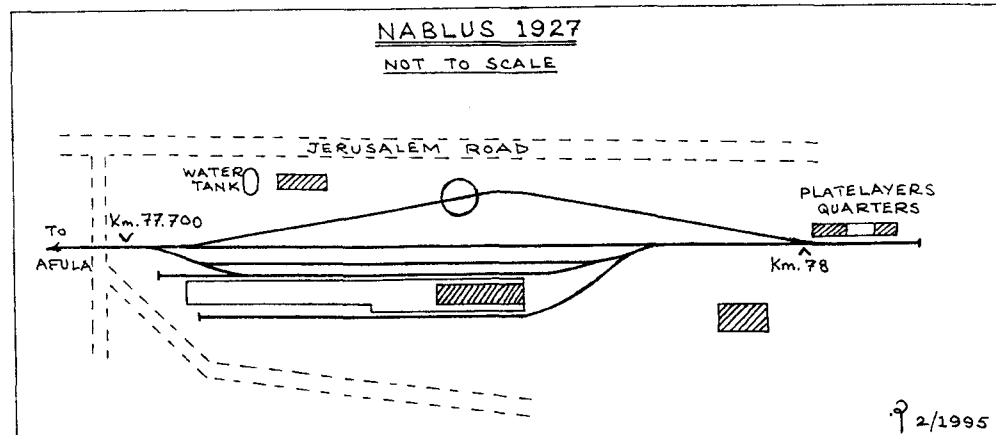
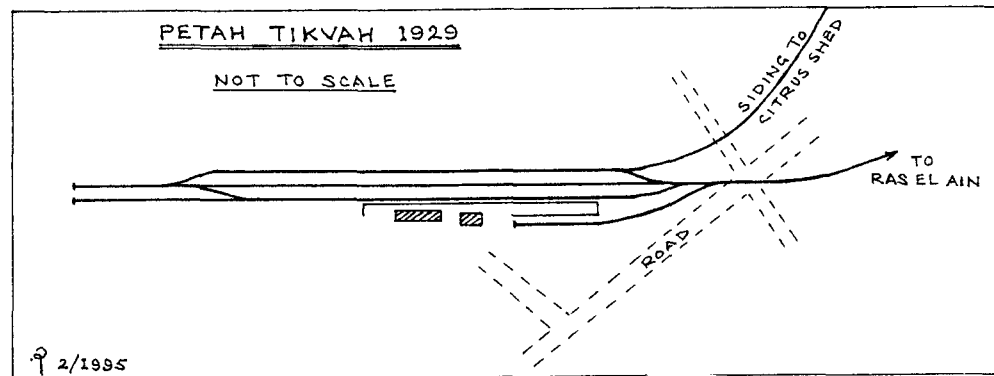
The railroad station at Jerusalem is outside the gates, at the foot of a hill, about one half mile from the city. As we passed up the winding road that leads up to the Jaffa gate we reflected on the curious history of this the holiest and the unholyest of cities....."

29:11:

TWO BRANCH TERMINI. By Paul Cotterell.

The accompanying station layouts are based on drawings from the Way & Works Dept. of Palestine Railways and show two quiet and secluded branch line termini; Petah Tikvah was of standard gauge, of course, while Nablus was of 1.05 metre gauge.

The drawings pretty much explain themselves, and little extra comment is required. Points at both stations were operated by hand from ground level, there being no signalling provided - at least none is shown in the original drawings. Both branches were worked on the one-engine-in-steam principle. Nablus had a turntable for turning the loco but no engine shed was built there. Petah Tikvah, like many other stations along the coastal plain, had a citrus shed (Indeed - this traffic was one of the main reasons for the line being built.) Once upon a time the brand name 'Jaffa', in Britain anyway, was practically synonymous with oranges. Nowadays orange growing is greatly reduced and Israel Railways have not transported citrus fruit for perhaps thirty years or so. Even back in 1929 I should imagine that road users cursed the railway at Petah Tikvah whenever shunting was carried out across that most inconveniently-sited road junction. The same might be true of Nablus too, only here the curses would have been in Arabic rather than Hebrew.



29:12: MORE ON INDUSTRIAL LIGHT RAILWAYS. By Paul Cotterell.

The brief notes on this subject in 21:15 brought a response from Uri Ben-Rehav who kindly sent me an old Hebrew language magazine which included several photos of light railways in use for levelling sand dunes prior to the development of these sites for building purposes. The magazine, called "Baran Hoser Avodah", was a fairly typical Zionist publication of the time (it appears to have been published in late 1937), extolling the virtues of manual labour and redemption of The Land. Its pages are rather too far gone to make half-decent copy negatives so I have used xerox photocopies instead; I wouldn't be a bit surprised if these don't reproduce quite well here.

The scenes are self-explanatory enough, and give a good idea of the method of operation. The magazine captions are vague in the extreme, but it seems that the first two illustrations were taken at Qiryat Haim between Haifa and Akko (Acre) where it is thought the site was being levelled for residential development; the third illustration is believed to be of Kiryat Avoda, mentioned in 21:15.



CROWN AGENTS ARCHIVES.

29:13:

The Crown Agents were the agents responsible for placing orders (and organising recruitment) for colonial governments. As such, orders for railway equipment and recruitment of railway staff for Palestine (not a Crown Colony but mostly treated as such), or Iraq, would have gone through their offices.

Alas, their archives do not seem to have been retained intact. A portion have been passed to the Science Museum, who have in turn passed them (as part of the 'Rail Transport Collection') on indefinite loan to 'Railworld' at Peterborough, where they are currently in storage and inaccessible. A friendly letter from the Archivist of the Science Museum states that he has a partial index to the collection of drawings but, out of thousands, "only four relate to Palestine Railways. These cover parts (fishbolts, signal fittings etc.) ca. 1928-30."

29:14:

EARLY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE STATION AT LUDD (LOD/LYDDA).

By Paul Cotterell.

URGENT

Civil Secretary,  
Government House,  
JERUSALEM.

PR  
43/16/5

Subject:- Alterations to LUDD Station.  
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In consequence of the increased Passenger traffic the present passenger Platforms at LUDD Station are inadequate and extra accommodation is badly needed.

It is proposed to convert each of the two existing platforms, and also to erect an overhead Bridge for use of Passengers crossing from one platform to another instead of having to cross the line as at present and which is a dangerous practice. In addition the platforms should be roofed in to afford protection to the travelling public against the weather.

Unless something is done to improve the state of the present main line platform, it will become a quagmire as soon as the rains set in.

Included in the Capital Estimate is an amount of £E.15,000 for alterations to LUDD Station and I would urge that a sum of £E.5000 be voted for the purpose referred to above. it is imperative that the work be put in hand and completed with the least possible delay and I should be glad of a very early reply.

HAIFA  
25.10.20.  
A.H.

R. Holmes,  
General Manager,  
Palestine Railways.

The above letter was discovered in the Israel State Archives in Jerusalem, and a subsequent letter in the files there shows that Mr. Holmes' proposal was accepted by the Government House "at a cost not exceeding LE.5000" on 1st. November 1920.

This short correspondence is the only evidence I know of that gives us a clue to the early years of Lod station, originally built by the British army. It is evident that the military had only constructed dirt platforms, and that the present-day Lod station, with proper platforms, canopies, stone buildings etc. dates from this proposal of the General Manager. The passenger footbridge was not, of course, built. Instead a subway was dug to link the platforms.

Despite the prompt reply from Government House there would not have been enough time to complete improvements before the rains set in that season, so passengers would have struggled through the mud for one more winter at least.

29:15:

MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS, 1942-46.

Hugh Hughes

My first railway journey in the Middle East was not very auspicious. It was a night trip on a troop train from Port Tewfik, Suez, where we had arrived from England on a "dry" American ship, to El Khatatba on the desert line between Cairo and Alexandria. We were a rear party, the main part of our battalion having left an hour and a half earlier; we left at 2130 hrs on 21 July 1942 and arrived at El Khatatba at 0600 hrs the next morning. 8½ hours for 130 miles was scarcely inspiring, nevertheless we had arrived at our destination an hour before the rest of the battalion appeared. But I had been too tired even to note the number of the locomotive on our train.

In September I found myself in Abbassia barracks, Cairo, on an astrofix course, learning how to plot a position in the desert by means of the stars, correct to within half a mile, and run by the Long Range Desert Group. This was an excellent course as it involved taking readings in the evenings (in the garden of the officers' mess!) and then working out the results the next morning, leaving every afternoon free to investigate Cairo and its railway system. This included a visit to the old Egyptian State Railways works at Bulac, by taxi as the area was very much "out of bounds". It was an eventful afternoon; to start with one of the taxi's wheels came off and had to be retrieved from the crowd that had gathered in seconds, then at the works they provided me with a military escort and showed every sign of wanting me to inspect the guard before leaving - rather hurriedly! But the contents of the works were a joy to behold and included two named Atlantics 57 AMENHOTEP and 80 KHEDIVE ISMAIL, several interesting NBL 4-4-0s of 1937 with domeless boilers and Caprotti valve gear (see "Middle East Railways", page 20), and in particular 2-2-2 278, one of four concocted jointly by NBL and Sentinel which did not appear to have any driving wheels (see "Locomotive Magazine", 1938, page 103).

There were other things to do during October but on 13 November the first train entered Mersa Matruh "station" during the Allied advance after El Alamein and two days later I was there with notebook to hand (unobtrusively of course!). There were four WD Stanier type 2-8-0s, 9302/26/34/38, the first of which had its boiler "armoured" with concrete slabs thereby significantly adding to the weight of the engine and reducing the visibility of the crew, while 9326 still bore the letters STJ to indicate Severn Tunnel Junction - to confuse the enemy no doubt. Also there was 0-6-0 diesel-electric shunter 14 built at Derby in 1941, trying to look like a box car as were the various tank wagons on view that day.

In January 1943 I was in Alexandria and had an opportunity to go round the goods shed at Gabbary. It is interesting to note that of the 47 locomotives recorded there 14 were ESR 2-6-0s while 12 were War Dept 2-8-0s (both Stanier and ROD types) and 6 were USA 2-8-2s. The most unusual item was No.1198, one of four 0-8-OT shunters, which carried no makers' plates then but was later identified as a Henschel product of 1910.

February found me on another course, this time to turn me into a signals officer; it was held at El Maadi, about 6½ miles south of Cairo, with a very intensive train service operated by a series of ten articulated two-coach Sentinel steam railcars of 1935 numbered 5060-65, together with ten pairs of diesel railcars (7000+8000 to 7900+8900) built by Ganz in 1936. My 1942 time-table listed ninety trains each way every 24 hours; nevertheless my chief memory is of the large number of travellers who boarded the train at Cairo through the windows instead of the doors!

On one occasion early in March I was pottering round the loco sidings at Cairo when an obliging railway employee showed me the complicated relays etc under Signal Box Cairo No.2 and then took me up to the signal box itself which was all power-operated with colour light signals and a fascinating illuminated diagram. When I showed appropriate interest they obligingly pulled various point and signal levers to show me the results and finally brought me a glass of "tea" - a peculiar beverage but most refreshing. I had brief visions of an Egyptian visitor being given similar treatment at say London Bridge; he just might perhaps have got a cup of railway tea.

On the following day I visited the Railway Museum adjacent to the main station at Cairo; the entrance fee was two piastres, equivalent to fivepence in those days. This was an enthralling place with all sorts of exhibits ranging from two full-size early locomotives (2-2-4T 30, built by Stephenson in 1862 incorporating an ornate decorated saloon, and 0-6-0 986 also by Stephenson dating from 1867) to various detailed models and an impressive collection of photographs. I procured a magnificent 664-page book "L'Egypte et ses Chemins de Fer" for the princely sum of 20 piastres (four shillings) because mice had nibbled the first two pages, and I "discovered" a fine collection of reports, diagrams and working timetables going back to the early days. (Incidentally the available material also included copies of the Palestine Railways reports going back to 1930!) Needless to say I visited this Museum whenever I was in Cairo during the next four years, collecting a great deal of information particularly about Egyptian railways; in due course they even provided me with a special table with a screen so that other visitors could not see my cigarette smoke. In 1981 I paid a return visit, but alas the museum was then but a shadow of its former self.

The signals course ended on 27 March and as my battalion was then in Baghdad I was given a Movement Order to rejoin them starting on the following day. I duly caught the 1345 hrs Haifa express from Cairo on the 28th consisting of 16 coaches hauled by 2-6-0 594 built by Armstrong Whitworth in 1928. It was a full train; our first class compartment had two VAD nurses, a Polish officer, an RAF officer, an army captain and myself, but soon after we started an Artillery officer came along looking for a fourth for bridge and so I spent the time in the guards van until it got too dark to continue. We crossed the Suez Canal by the new Firdan bridge and arrived at Qantara East at 1915 hrs where we detained for a good meal courtesy of Naafi (Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes). When we left at 2030 hrs the train engine was American 2-8-2 9151 (Alco 1942).

With the dawn we found ourselves travelling through masses of orange groves, an agreeable change from the Egyptian scene, and as we had changed some cash into local currency (one Egyptian pound = 1025 Palestine mills) we could buy the oranges more or less straight from the trees with the help of enterprising local youths. At Lydda I saw Palestine Railway locomotives for the first time: 4-6-0s 64, 885, 894 and 919, and a neat 4-6-2T numbered 14 painted a pleasant maroon colour, together with WD ROD 2-8-0s 9714, 9747 and 9771. We arrived at Haifa at 1000 hrs but I had only two hours to grab a coffee and a couple of buns (the Naafi again) followed by a brief tour of the loco sheds. I was interested to note that the narrow gauge rolling stock was labelled HR, CFH or DHP whereas the locomotives were all HR; these consisted of 0-6-0T 19 (Krauss 5240 of 1904), 2-8-0s 108, 156 and 163, the last carrying a Borsig plate 9012 of 1914, 2-8-2 256 and the unique 2-8-0T rebuild 300 (which was to be withdrawn four months later).

We left Haifa at mid-day for Damascus. The train consisted of some aged four-wheel coaches and a few goods wagons, but it was headed by an efficient-looking 2-8-2 (256). During the journey I was intrigued to note a station name-board proudly stating in English and Arabic that it was 809 feet below sea-level. Then we arrived at Samakh, where we saw 0-6-0T 35 shunting, and our train engine became 2-8-2 262. The long journey up the Yarmuk gorge, during which our identification cards and movement orders were carefully checked, was most impressive. At one stage even the 2-8-2 could not cope with the gradient and the train was backed down for about half a mile so that it could make another and more successful attempt. Then suddenly the scenery changed completely and we were on a flat stretch of line leading to the railway junction at Deraa - which was a blaze of electric light! Had a good meal there and so on to Damascus behind 2-8-2 263. Arrived there at 0100 hrs on the 30th and trucks took us up to the Transit Camp. In the darkness I inadvertently found myself in the barrack room of some Polish women soldiers from which I made a very hurried retreat!

The next stage was by Nairn bus to Baghdad, a service started and operated by two brothers from New Zealand after World War One. The start time was 1300 hrs on 30 March and on this occasion there were three buses running; two were six-wheeled articulated "Pullmans" complete with bar but I was in No.3 which was four-wheeled but still remarkably comfortable. Two drivers took turns in each coach and after reaching a frontier post which could have come straight out of "Beau Geste" we left anything resembling a road and drove across the open desert. The travelling was smooth and fast, but very boring! Eventually it got dark but they carried on regardless. We stopped for breakfast at Ramadi and arrived at Baghdad at 0900 hrs on the 31st, 540 miles from Damascus. The normal fare was then 14 English pounds; incidentally Cairo to Haifa was quoted as 4½ pounds with another 2½ pounds to Damascus.

I spent most of the next twelve months in Iran but on 17 June 1944 I found myself in Tripoli in Lebanon where I was greatly intrigued by five archaic-looking 0-8-0s (21/3/4,33/5) with high chimneys, large domes and prominent outside eccentrics. They were painted black but had a series of polished brass plates on the cab sides giving the name of the railway company (CF Damas-Hama et prolongements), maker (Cail, 1906) and maker's number, and the names of the driver and fireman; the engine number was on a small rectangular plate at the base of the chimney (see "Middle East Railways", page 68) and on the front of the smokebox.

There were also eight more modern German G8 0-8-0s (807/18/23/6/30/5/44/8) which had seen service on three railway systems - Germany, France and Syria. Finally there was an interesting eight-wheeled railcar, blue with a cream top, built by de Dietrich et Cie, Niederbronn, and numbered ZZACD<sup>ty</sup>3 ! The HBT line was then being worked by the Whitcomb diesel-electric locomotives of which 6201/15 and 6584/94 were duly noted. It was interesting to see the variety of initials on the rolling stock on that line - in addition to the usual HBT, DHP, PR and ESR there were vehicles marked ISR from Iraq and others with LSB (Lignes Syriennes de Baghdad) with the Turkish Crescent & Star, a system being operated as a subsidiary of DHP.

In October 1944 I was in Baghdad again and this time I paid a visit to the Baghdad North locomotive shed where a friendly Iraqi Locomotive Superintendent, who had been trained at Derby, took me on a tour of his domain. We interrupted a card school in one of the workshops, and I learned how to fire an oil-burning metre gauge locomotive, but I was also told how to get to the main workshops at Shalchiyah which I promptly did on the following day. The Works Manager was most obliging and gave me generous access to blueprints, allocations and other records covering all the locomotive stock, standard and metre gauge, on the system.

The metre gauge engines in Iraq had almost without exception arrived second-hand from India during the two world wars and so I was suddenly faced with a large number of interesting locomotive types quite new to me. I made copious notes, both then and on a later visit, and when in due course I returned to England and found that articles on these Indian engines were practically non-existent I started researching at the India Office Library and elsewhere. Hence my particular interest in Indian railways and their locomotives which has lasted for fifty years since I first saw some metre gauge 4-6-0s at Baghdad North!

In 1945 it was decreed that all units in Middle East Forces, Iraq and Iran would send teams to take part in a grand shooting competition to be held in the middle of April at El Maadi, south of Cairo. We were then in Iran and as I was one of the team I had an unexpected opportunity to sample travel conditions right across the Middle East. We went from Basra to Baghdad on the metre gauge Up Mail, leaving at 1830 hrs on 26 March and arriving at 1015 the next morning. The train consisted of 15 carriages as listed below (together with the corresponding 16-coach make-up noted on the following day):

Arrived 27 March				Arrived 28 March			
TB	022			TB	020	Ajmer(BBCI)	1910
TB	072			TB	018		
FSB	041	Ajmer	1913	FSB	062	Ajmer	
TB	024	Ajmer	1913	TB	025	Ajmer	1910
FSTB	163			FSTB	161	Shalch.	1931(frame Ajm'00)
FSB	051	Ajmer	1913	FSB	67	Shalch.	1944
FSB	63			FSB	60		
FSB	59	Met.Cam.	1934	FSB	52	Glos.RCW	
FSB	51	Glos.RCW		DB	41	Ajmer	1911
DB	48	Glos.RCW		FSB	62	Glos.RCW	
FSA	49	Birm.RCW	1941	FSB	65	Shalch.	1944
TB	140	Met.Cam.	1934	TB	138	Met.Cam.	1934
TB	134	Glos.RCW		TB	128		
TB	185	Ajmer	1914	TB	126		
BLB	216	Shalch.	1945	TB	133		
				BLB	215		

All vehicles with an O number prefix were war-time additions from India (mostly from BBCIR). F,S,T indicated First, Second, Third class; D stood for Dining Car and BL for Brake/Luggage. The final B meant Bogie Vehicle, A being an Air-conditioned bogie coach. Meals were good and cost 350 fils (dinner), 250 fils (breakfast) and 50 fils (morning tea) where 1000 fils = 1 Iraqi dinar = 1 pound sterling. The locomotive on each occasion was a War Dept class W 2-8-2.

On the 29th I noted some standard gauge bogie coaches waiting to leave as the Taurus Express for Haidarpasa, opposite Istanbul:-

C 303	3rd class.	Labelled BAGDAD CD.	Plate: Düsseldorf Oberbilk 1905.
AB 105	1st/2nd.	Labelled BAGDAD LSB.	
3401	Wagons-Lits Restaurant Car.	Plate:Metrop.CW&F 1928.	Board:Toras Ekspresi.
3450	Wagons-Lits Sleeping Car.	1st/2nd, 17 berths.	Plate: Birm.RCW No.49.
1320	Wagons-Lits Baggage Car.	Plate: Ateliers de Marly - Nord	1939.

Then at 1700 hrs on the 30th it was back on the Nairn bus (an articulated one this time) for Damascus and at 0800 hrs on the 2nd April we left on the narrow gauge train for Deraa, Samakh and Haifa, arriving about 2000 hrs. A detailed account of this journey, the continuation to Cairo, and my return from Cairo to Damascus a month later appeared as item 11 in HaRakevet 5.

It is perhaps worth recording that officers' baggage was always wired and sealed at Cairo Main station and then placed in the luggage van for Haifa. Our battalion padre once told me that when he reached Qantara East he had gone along to the baggage area to check that his two large suitcases were still there, and was somewhat mystified to find three suitcases duly wired up and sealed with his name on each. But on arrival at Haifa there were just two suitcases again and our padre was left to ponder on the mysterious ways of the East.

In September 1945 our battalion moved all the way from Tehran to Suez - by road! This did not however prevent me from paying another visit to the Shalchiyah Works at Baghdad where I found two ROD 2-8-0s 70724 & 70747, two of six which had been transferred from Palestine two months earlier. They were painted black with WAD on the tenders and the numbers in yellow on the cabsides. LNER numberplates, 6527 & 6233 respectively, were also on the cabsides; but 70724 was in fact supposed to be LNER 5354 while 70791 (also Iraq ex PR) was ex 6527. As both 70724 and 70791 were under repair at Azzib (199 Workshop Co) in April 1945 this suggests an interchange of parts.

The next railway line we saw was at Mafrqa, with a brief glimpse of 2-8-2 255 on a freight train, followed by 254 between Affula and Beisan. Then on a goods north of Gaza was standard gauge 4-6-0 65; all these engines were black with large numbers on the tenders. From Gaza we went inland to Beersheba and then through Asluj to El Auja. It was most interesting to see so much of the remains of the World War One line from Beersheba onwards; for most of the way the route was easily traceable.

From 27 September to January 1946 I was at Suez with quite a lot of spare time on my hands. Several trips were made to the Cairo Railway Museum to make sure that I had exhausted the available information there. But mostly my railway visits were to the nearby 169 Railway Workshops and 198 (together with 400) Transportation Stores where I could inspect a fascinating variety of locomotives, in particular many of the Stanier 2-8-0s which were in a sorry state after their work in Iran. The Royal Engineers staff were most friendly and helpful, and it was there that I first came across an official monthly circular listing all the locomotives in the Middle East with their locations and status. Later, on return to the UK, I managed to "find" all these circulars preserved in the Public Record Office and they proved of great value when I was compiling "Middle East Railways".

On 30 January I made my final Middle East rail trip - from Suez to Port Said. Just after Ismailia we saw an impressive sight on the Canal; the aircraft carrier INDOMITABLE, cruiser LONDON and the liner GEORGIC were all tied up facing south and passing them going north was the French battleship RICHELIEU. At Port Said we boarded our ship DUNNOTTAR CASTLE and watched our heavy baggage being hoisted aboard by crane - with ominous crunching sounds! We moved out at 0600 hrs on the following morning.

On arrival back in England it was a question of sorting through copious notes and supplementing these with information from London sources. Thus visits to the Public Record Office gave me access to the annual reports of the Palestine Railways (reference CO 814) while the Crown Agents Office let me see various diagram books and files. In due course the war diaries (PRO WO 169) of the Middle East GHQ (Movement & Transportation) and the railway workshops and stores were released and provided further detailed information about the war years. Perhaps the most unusual visit was to the Iraqi Embassy where one of their staff opened a cupboard and gave me their copies of the Iraqi State Railways annual reports covering several years and still in their original postal wrappings!

"ON EAGLES WINGS".

This is the autobiography of Ezer Weizman, now President of Israel, published 1976 by Macmillan and 1979 by Berkley, New York. It covers mainly his career in the Israel Air Force, but has a few - a very few - references to railways:

p.60. Saturday May 29th. 1948 - during the War of Independence. The Egyptian armoured columns heading for Tel Aviv had reached Ashdod; one of the last road bridges had just been blown up by Israeli sappers, and a railway bridge was now apparently being used. At this time the Israeli Air Force consisted of four Czech-built Messerschmidt 109's that had been acquired in Czechoslovakia and brought to Israel in pieces, where they were reassembled - but had been kept secret, to the extent of not even undergoing a test-flight !

"Avidan was bringing us an order, from Chief of Staff Yigael Yadin, to take off and attack the Egyptian armoured column near Ashdod. It was a great moment. ...Of course there was no time to consider trifles, such as the fact that these planes had never taken off, or even been tested in flight, their parts had not been checked, no one knew whether their systems functioned or if their machine guns fired. No one was sure that their bombs would drop - or that their wings wouldn't. These questions had to be shoved aside.

Lou Lenart was chosen to take off first. Moddy Allon was his number two. I'd take off next, and Eddie Cohen would be my number two. We couldn't conceal our excitement as we bent over the maps. The sense of a unique moment showed on every face. I suppose that my ears were as flushed as theirs. At dusk we started up and taxied along the concrete runway. Eddie, my number two, was dallying. His engine wouldn't start. It didn't take him more than three or four minutes, but to me it seemed like hours. Finally, both pairs were in the air.

From take-off [at Tel Nof] to our combat area was very short. As soon as we got up into the air, we could see anti-aircraft fire directed at us from the direction of Ashdod. We swung out to sea climbing to 7,000 feet, and swooped towards the Egyptian column. The sight took my breath away: the Egyptian army, in all its power and glory, was spread along the road, and knew, more or less, what stood between it and Tel Aviv - two and a half companies of the Givati Brigade, anxiety-stricken and exhausted. I must confess, I had a profound sense of fulfilling a great mission.

I let go my two bombs, speeding them on their way with a prayer that they would delay the column that was moving northwards. Anti-aircraft fire harried us from all sides. I dove once more, blasting away with my 20-mm cannon, which soon jammed. From afar I saw the first pair doing the same. Down below the Egyptians were scattering in every direction. And then, amidst the din of bombs and shooting and diving and climbing and anti-aircraft fire, I saw Eddie, my number two, dive - down, down, lower and lower. I was extremely concerned that he was diving too low. And then the crash, shrouded by fire and smoke. To this day, there is no way of knowing whether he copped anti-aircraft fire or whether some technical fault on his first mission made it his last.

We landed. Moddy's plane had also suffered some damage in one wing and was temporarily out of action. After one operation we had two and a half planes and four pilots left, in place of the four planes and five pilots we had before. For an air force to lose 25 per cent of its planes and 20 per cent of its pilots in its first action is, of course, unpleasant...."

p.62. "The next day, 30th. May, at 5.30am., two Messerschmidts took off against the Iraqis and Jordanians. Rubinfeld and I were piloting, and we headed for Tulkarem. We dropped bombs on the Tulkarem railway station and strafed the armoured columns spread along the road. Suddenly I noticed Rubinfeld's plane smoking; I saw him baling out. Our second Messerschmidt finished. Another 25 per cent of our stock of planes..."

p.149. During the 1956 Sinai Campaign: Weizman was flying a French-built Ouragan:

"I released a certain amount of fuel, still leaving me enough to shoot an Egyptian train, strafe and rocket and get back to base safely..."

p.260f. During October 1968, after the initial shots of the "War of Attrition" during which the Israeli forces, on the Suez Canal, were subjected to continual Egyptian bombardments:

"The first thing was to erect fortifications. A number of officers, headed by Elhanan Klein, the chief engineering officer, brought up an idea: "It's a long affair to pour concrete into fortifications so that they can stand up to bombardments. Let's strip down the Egyptian railway line in Sinai and use its rails as steel shields."

Chaim Bar-Lev hesitated. We didn't know if it would stand up to bombardment. We built a wall like the one they proposed and conducted experiments on it. We fired 120-mm and 160-mm mortar shells straight at it, as well as 105-mm, 130-mm and 155-mm cannon shells, and the Russian 122-mm., and the wall didn't collapse. The detonating layer held out. We stripped down the railway line, ordered used rails from abroad and built the first fortresses. Between March 1969 and 1st. August 1970, we lost 250 killed and about 1,000 wounded on the Canal. Only a few were killed inside the fortresses, all the rest were hit when they were outside them or on their way to or from the line."

RAIL MOTORS FOR USE IN WAR.

From "The Locomotive" for July 15th. 1915, p.162f.

This is a short article showing 10hp. and 20hp. Drewry Rail Motors, the latter with 9 French military men on board, and a picture of an E.S.R. Drewry Rail Motor "In service on Suez Canal Defence"; it is marked "U.E.A.R." on the front, and is standing in front of Ferdan Cabin signal box, which is itself protected at the rear by a wall of sandbags.

PALESTINE RAILWAY STAFF.

There are several reference books which list the senior members of the colonial administrations and the professional officers of the public services. The following is from "Who's Who in the Balkans and the Orient", Vol. IV, "Palestine", "Fourth Section, 1934-35". Published by Mehmet Zeki Ormandag, printed by the Syrian Orphanage Press, Jerusalem. A copy is to be found at the Ginzach HaMedinah in Jerusalem. pp.49-53 include a brief summary of Railway history in Palestine.

p.26: WEBB, Cecil Richard. O.B.E., M.C.

Gen. Manager of Pal. Rlys., Haifa. Born in August 1887 at Saxton, Yorkshire. British. Educated at Leatherhead School. From 1904-1914 N.E.R., England. 1914 Asst. Traffic Manager, Tanganyika Rly. 1914-19 War Service, British and German East Africa. 1919-23 Traffic Manager, Tanganyika Rly. 1923-30 G.M. & Traffic Manager, Sierra Leone Rly. 1930 G.M. P.R. O.B.E., M.C. Youngest son of late Rev. S.G.M. Webb, Rector of Newton Kyme, Yorks. Married Beatrice Helen Gordon, youngest daughter of late Charles Gulland Ballingall, Hampstead.

p.28. BAKER. Percy Cecil John. Asst. Superintendent of Line, Haifa. Born 6/11/1888. G.W.R. 1904-14. Military service 1914-20. Appointed Asst. Chief Accountant 1920. Present position since 1925.

p.29. CAMPIGLI. Lt.-Col. George Murray. M.C. M.I. of T. Asst. G.M. of Rlys. & Supt. of Line. Born 21/7/1890. Transportation Officer, Victorian State Rlys. 1905-14. Military service 1914-20. Appointed Asst. G.M. 1920 and Supt. of Line in addition 1923. Member of Inst. of Transport 1921. Member of Standing C'ttee for Commerce & Ind. 1928-30.

p.30. COTCHING. Houghton Aldgate. A.M.I. Mech.E. G.M.E. to PR, Haifa. Born 16/10/1887. Military service 1915-20. Appointed Loco. Supt. 1920. Present title since 1922. Inspector under the Fencing of Machinery Act, 1929.

p.40. SCRIVENER. Rupert Frederick. A.R.S.M., D.I.C., A.I.M.M. Chief Engineer to PR. Born 21/11/1890. Military Service 1914-20. Asst. Ch. Eng. 1920. Engineer, Works & Ways, 1924. Present position since 1931.

p.42. WILLIAMS. Lennard Frederick. Sec. to PR, Haifa. Born 23/2/1895. Military service 1914-19. G.M.'s staff, G.W.R. 1919-25. Appointed to present position 1925. Sec. of Rly. Board, 1928.

p.42. YOUNG. William Martin. Chief Acct. PR, Haifa. Born 11/1/90. North British Rly. 1905-20. Deputy Ch. Acct. Ceylon Govt. Rlys. 1921-7. Appointed to present position 1927. Acting Accts. Officer, S.M.R. 1927.

Also of interest are the following entries:

p.105f. MOUCHLY. Jacob. Engineer, Director of Haifa Bay Water Works. Born Jaffa Dec. 1885. British. Studied in Germany. Former Chief Inspector of Hedjaz Rly. & Works Manager of Pal. Rly. Pensioned Govt. official. Founder of Haifa Bay Water Works.

Iron Cross (German), Gold Service Cross with Crown (Austrian); Turkish Iron Crescent. Son of Zorah Mouchly. Married Melanie Kahn. 2 children.

p.114. David Remez. Member of Secretariat, Exec. of Gen. Fed. of Jewish Labour, Member of Gen. Zionist Council. Tel Aviv. Palestinian. Born Kapus (Russia) 1886. Matric. at a Russian Gymnasium. Legal studies, begun at Istanbul Law School, interrupted by outbreak of war between Bulgaria and Turkey. Came to Pal. in 1913. Agric. worker in several colonies. In 1918 began his public career as Sec. of Jewish Agric. Assoc. Took an active part in amalgamation of Pal. workers' parties. For some time editor of "Kuntress", weekly organ of Ahduth Ha-avodah party, and was in charge of Solel Boneh. Present position since 1931."

[Later, of course, he became first Minister of Transport for Israel.]

[There are no entires for K. Mansfield, or Baruch LKatinka, or Paicovitch.....]

WHO WAS WHO ?

Idly looking through a copy of "Who's Who in Israel, 1956" I noticed there was no special mention of the railways except (I think) the following:

p.385." SELLA. (BOUKSTEIN). Abraham. Engineer. Chief Engineer, Israel Railways. Member, American Railway Engineering Association. b. Jaffa 3/3/1907; m. Sara Itgin. 2 sons, 1 daughter. Educated: International Correspondence Schools, London. Licensed Surveyor, Pal. Govt. 1939. Promoted to Chief Draftsman Surveyor in 1927 (sic.) In present position since 1948. On purchasing mission to USA, France & Sweden on behalf of Isr. Govt. 1949-50. On studies in U.K., France, Belgium & Switzerland 1951. Address: 62, UNO Avenue, Haifa. tel. 3035."

Sella's promotion was presumably 1947, not 1927; he became R.F. Scrivener's successor as Chief Engineer at the age of 41. For the benefit of non-Hebrew speakers, "Sella" is the Hebrew word for "Rock" or "Stone" - clearly a Hebraization of his original name. Ben-Gurion especially was adamant that Israelis travelling abroad on official business took Hebrew names rather than 'Diaspora' ones. Incidentally - what was he buying in America, France and Sweden? Railway equipment? This was before the Reparations agreements brought German stock to Israel.

29:19:

ANCIENT IMAGES.

In recent issues of 'Harakevet' the issue has been raised as to whether El Sejed station ever really existed. Well - here is the proof ! From Jacob Wahrman in Jerusalem (to whom our thanks) come copies - alas, they are copies of copies of copies, which I hope will come out clearly in the magazine - of two rare photographs by Bonfils. In one, No. 1201, "Passage d'un train à la station de Sejed", the J-J Baldwin 2-6-0 has paused in the bare countryside to take water from a substantial circular water tower, with what looks like a brick base and a riveted metal superstructure; the object to its left appears to be some form of pump attached, presumably, to an artesian well. The loco is standing over a pit in between the rails of the only track - no loop or sidings are visible. Passengers are standing at the track side, but there is no sign of any other building - unless it is well hidden behind the water tower.

In the second, No. 1202, "Passage d'un train à Deir-Aban", another rarely-photographed station, we see the same train - pulled, of course, by 2-6-0 No. 3 (why is it that this seems to have been the only loco ever to get photographed ?) pausing at a substantial station structure similar to those known to have existed at Ramle and Bittir; in front of this is a small hut which may have possibly been some form of signal cabin - or maybe just a lavatory... To the left of the picture a taller building can just be seen - though it is too far from the tracks to be a goods shed. In the foreground a platelayers' trolley has been placed neatly off the line next to a pile of sleepers, and in the background two further tracks can just be made out. One of the engine crew is inspecting the boiler fittings.

The train is mixed - two 4-wheel vans (one with brakesman's cabin), then a 4-wh. open loaded with something covered in a tarpaulin, then another van, then two bogie coaches.

Noticeable also is that there is not a single habitation in sight in either picture, no sign of life apart from the train and its immediate adjuncts.

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Printer's note:

The two photos mentioned above are printed as a centre-spread.

The quality of reproduction is as good as can be got from the copies.

29:20:

"THE ROMMEL PAPERS.

This book, edited by B.H. Liddell Hart and originally published by Harcourt, Brace in New York, 1953, (also Da Capo, ISBN 0-306-80157-4) consists of letters by the German General Erwin Rommel to his wife, plus other biographical material. The letters vary full accounts of the campaign in progress in North Africa, together with his personal feelings.

From p. 227: "Atdawn on the 18th. June [1942]... the 21st. Panzer Division...was moving [near Gambut]. The road and railway were reached shortly before 04.30. This railway, which the British had built during the past few months, ran from Mersa Matruh to the outer perimeter of Tobruk. We crossed it, demolishing some of the track on the way....."

From p. 268. [Part of a tirade against Cavallero and the Italians, with whom he had stormy relations]. "We had built tremendous hopes rund the captured British military railway from Tobruk to El Daba, and had supposed that large-scale railway traffic would soon be organised to the front, thus greatly relieving the pressure on our road transport. But here, too, nothing immediate was done.

The cause of the trouble - as I have already said - lay in the over-organisation and muddle which characterised the Italian supply staffs."

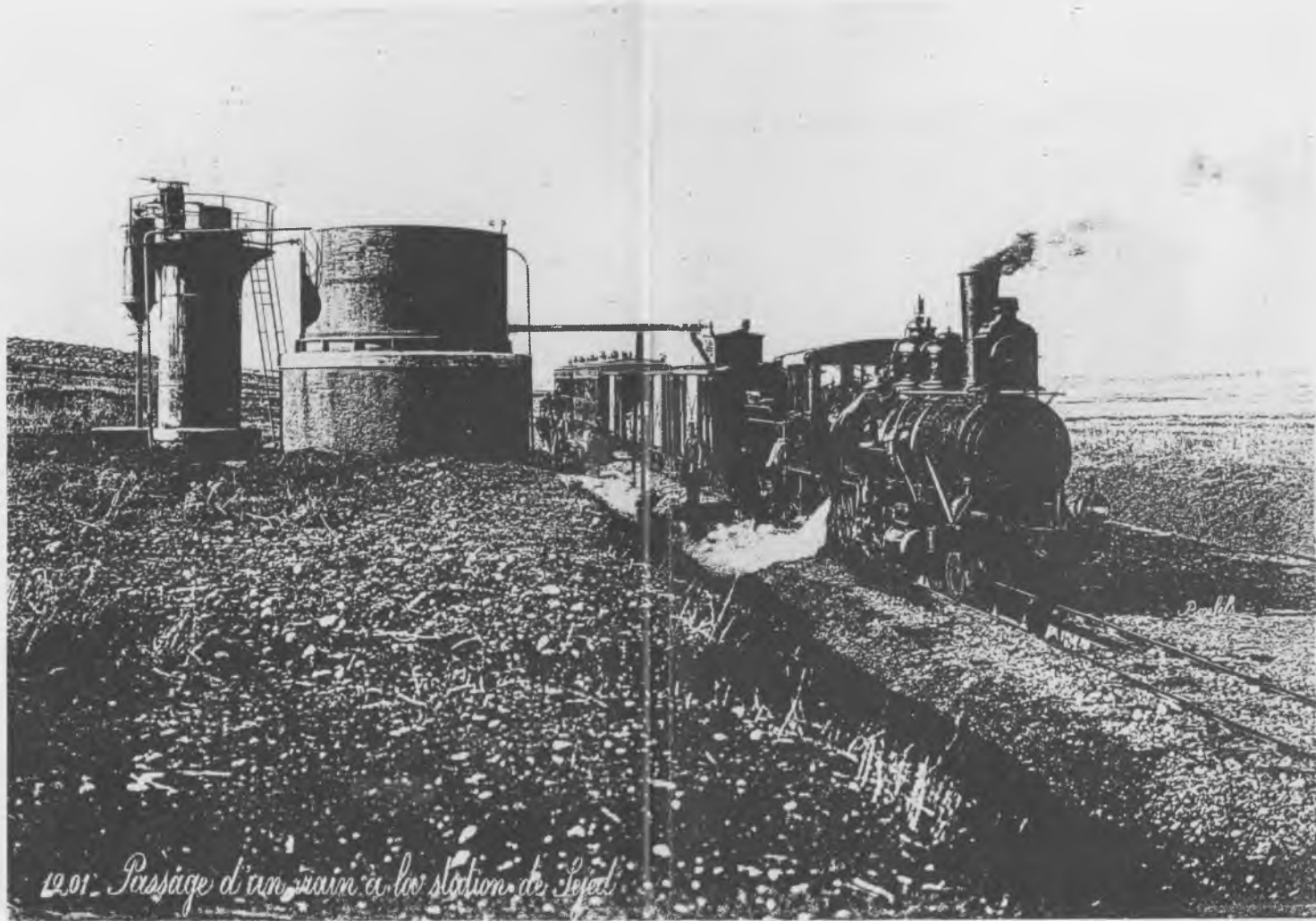
From p.293. "On 23rd. September 1942 I reached the following agreements with the Italians (at Derna):.....The Italians agreed to ship 7,000 tons of rails and sleepers to Africa, for the construction of railway communications..."

Later: "It is interesting to compare Cavallero's promises with what was actually done by about the middle of October...Similarly, there arrived neither rails nor sleepers. The only work that was done was by men of the 90th. Light Division."

From p.391: By this time the Afrika Korps was retreating westwards and northwards into Tunisia before the 8th. Army: "On 26th. January [1943] we shifted Army headquarters into the district west of Ben Gardane (across the Tunisian frontier). On the way we saw the railway which was under construction between Tunis and the Libyan frontier. If only we could have held the front at Sirte for three months, this railway would probably have been completed between Tunis and Sirte. It was greatly to our disadvantage that the Italians had not built a line along the North African coast before the war, as a supply route seevral hundred miles long is really only tolerable if the bulk of goods can be carried either by rail or sea. Road transport is relatively uneconomic due to the large amount of petrol it consumes."

[Ed. The ultimate defeat of Rommel was due largely to the success of the Alllies in strangling his supply route - towards the end the German forces had barely enough petrol left to retreat.]

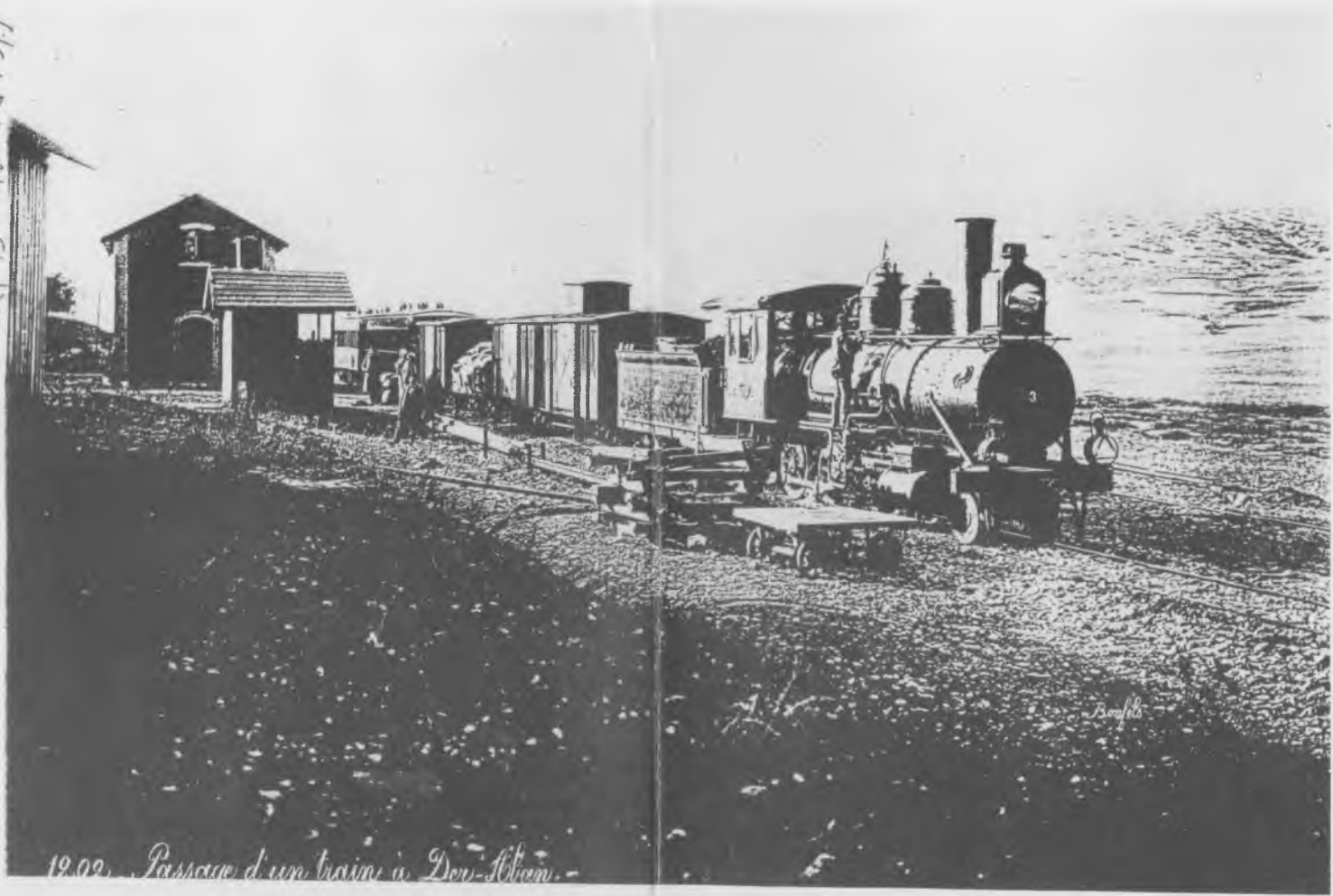




1201. Passage d'un train à la station de Seried.

Bonfils : Seried Station

film: Dair Alban Station



1902. Passage d'un train à Douv-Hérou.

Bouffé

29:21:

### A HAIRY JOURNEY...

James Laing of Sheffield has sent me a copy of a letter written by his father Dennis to his grandmother, from a Transit Camp at Port Said, dated 23rd. April 1946:

"Here is only a brief note to let you know that I'm definitely on my way home - my last letter, if I remember rightly, I posted in Haifa. The story continues:

We entrained at Haifa on Thursday at 11am. and eventually left at 3 that afternoon. There was considerable excitement at our going. You will have heard about the Civil Servants' Strike and the Railways Strike in Palestine. Not a train had moved during the last 8 days - we in our train were to make the first attempt.

The powers were expecting some of the terrorists to at least blow up the line or bridge, and the most elaborate precautions were taken. There were policemen stationed at every bridge and important junction - an armoured rail-car proceeded in front of the train - alas ! its maximum speed was only 25 mph. - though it did exceed this on one occasion when we ran into it and sent it rocketing down the track. There was an RAF-Army cooperation plane circling overhead.

However, in typical M.E. fashion, no-one really resented us going - crowds of civilians had gathered near the line just outside Haifa to wave good-bye - and even in Palestine the sight of an entirely troop train is a rarity.

Before I say any more - the normal time taken for the train to reach Cairo - some 400 miles away - is 18 hours., However, at 3pm. the soldier-crew put their last dab of grease in the axle-boxes and climbed on board - the driver, an R.E. Corporal who had found himself a genuine, black, oily railwayman's cap - played the LNER signal of cock-a-doodle-doo - there were cheers from the crowds and from the impatient passengers. We were off - at last. We moved slowly - but why worry - at least we were moving. A mile outside Haifa we stopped again - apparently the escorting rail-car had developed some trouble. That wait lasted 45 minutes. Two hours later we stopped again while an indignant Arab linesman was forced to surrender the key that worked one of the railway points. It was dusk at 8pm. when we reached Athlit, 14 miles south of Haifa. While the line was being examined we heard that we would not move during the night. We wondered about dinner - were resigned - then after a flurry of light-signals and whistles we moved again.

At midnight we reached Lydda, woke up the NAAFI staff and scrounged tea and sandwiches. The following morning, Saturday [sic], at 7am. we ventured on - and reached Gaza in time for breakfast - tea and sandwiches - we remained in Gaza all that day. At 6pm. we climbed on board again and reached Rafa - 30 miles away - 140 miles from Haifa - by 11pm. and 27 hours after leaving Haifa. We dined off oranges bought from the ever-enterprising local Arab.

At sunrise on Easter Sunday we breakfasted off more oranges and hard-boiled eggs. "Don't be alarmed" said the O.C. Train; "There's a hot meal coming from the NAAFI at Gaza." This arrived - the inevitable tea and sandwiches at 10am. Throughout that morning and until after lunch time we heard rumours that the bridge ahead had been blown-up, that there was no water where there should have been, that the train behind us had broken down, that our engine was giving up the ghost.

Throughout that long day several small parties telephoned their parent units requesting transport - and occasionally it arrived. At four in the afternoon one of our crowd spotted a REME truck that had come from a nearby unit to collect two soldiers - we questioned the driver, and went to see the officer in charge. "Yes", says he, "The truck's going through to Port Said - room for six easily !" We returned to the train, loaded our kit on the truck - then back to this unit for a meal.

At 7pm., in a truck loaded with blankets and kit and five soldiers, six officers and an ATS corporal we began the long journey across the Sinai Desert to the Suez Canal. How the ATS Corporal came to be on board one of my brother officers could no doubt explain better than myself. He maintained that she had to return to Cairo and missed the special truck laid on for the ladies of the party. He does not add that she missed this truck because she was walking with him. However the feminine company made the journey less tedious. The rough road made sleeping out of the question, and so we lay in the back of the truck talking, laughing, watching the moon - a glorious full moon that before it rose lit half the sky like an enormous blast furnace, but when having risen above the horizon made the desert as light as day. Periodically we stopped the truck and switched off the engine while the petrol tanks were refilled from our reserve store. The desert was as silent as a lonely churchyard - no dogs barked, no distant lights flickered. We trudged through the sand to the top of a small mound a few hundred yards from the truck - and listened to the silence. The road lay black in the moonlight and seemed endless, it stretched away like a single black line on a sheet of paper must seem to an ant that crawls along it. Then we heard the sharp metallic cracks as one of the soldiers jumped down to the road from the driving cab - and then we heard him speak to someone -

the sounds seemed to emphasize the silence.

"Come, let's be going", said one of our party. And we returned to the truck.

At four a.m. we arrived at the Suez Canal - to find the ferry out of action and the swing bridge closed to us. We stretched our legs a little and settled down to sleep again - waking to find the sun high and hot and the crew of the swing bridge having breakfast on the opposite side of the canal. We shouted across to them and they opened the bridge. There was no breakfast for us, so we drove on up the canal road to Port Said, arriving at 9.30 am. That was on Monday morning; here now it is Wednesday, and only rumours of our going on Saturday to console us. However, we are on the way."

29:22

THEO PELZ.

Theo's name has occurred several times in 'Harakevet'; in April 1994 I had the opportunity to meet him in Haifa, and made notes on a variety of topics based on his remarkable archive on both ships and railways. The following are in no particular order:

- a). Theo was born in 1922 in Breslau (now Wroclaw), and came to Palestine in 1934. His father was a Children's Physician, his mother taught English to girls who intended to enter the English High School. He joined the Army in 1941 in Palestine, was transferred to Egypt in 1943 and in 1945 to Sudan. Originally in the Palestine Regiment, he transferred to the Royal Engineers and became Clerk to O.C. Troops at Wadi Halfa. He left the army in 1946, and has been a close observer of railway developments.
- b). In winter 1952 he was serving on the ship - either "Dromit" or "Dvora" - which carried the first batch of the 25-Taf covered vans to Israel. Some had steel sides fitted in place, and have friction bearings rather than ball-bearings.
- c). The 20-Resh cement hoppers were home-built on the underframes of wartime wagons. (Cotterell fig. 144).
- d). It was Theo who discovered an O&K 0-4-0T near Geshar Paz, in Haifa, (Cotterell Plate 113) and another in a nearby shed which has now gone. Koppel was the Krauss (of Munchen) agent in Berlin; Krauss had several Jewish agents - e.g. Herr Deutscher in Belgrade, Herr Lehrer in Moscow.
- e). The Esslingen railcar sets consisted of 12 motor cars, 12 driving trailer cars and 22 intermediate trailer cars, enabling 10 3-car and 2 4-car sets.
- f). Re. the captured Egyptian 0-6-0D No. 4239: (Cotterell Plate 97). The contemporary Jung catalogue shows this to be one of 42 delivered to the ESR, Nos. 4201-4242, type R 363 C, of 360 hp. The diesel motor was type RH 335 S, with a Voith flexible coupling L37, all "In Tropen Ausfuhrung fur Wustenbahnen" ("In tropical format for desert railways"). The ESR also got some 720 hp. B + B diesel locos. The Esslingen 0-6-0 D's are described as "Type Peru".
- g). Theo has a postcard of Haifa ca. 1953 - Palphot No. 3070 - from the road to Neve Shaanan. showing a line of old steam locos in the yard !

29:23:

ASPECTS OF ARABIAN RAILWAYS.

H. St. J. Philby wrote "Arabia", published by Ernest Benn Ltd. of London in 1930 - a brief guide to the history and political background of this region. At the time he was British Resident in Amman. Here are some excerpts:

p.168f. "From 1865 onward Kuwait had been tacitly regarded as lying within the sphere of exclusive Turkish influence, and the forward policy of the British Government had excluded this port from its purview until the end of the century, when Europe suddenly awoke to a sense of its potential strategic importance. In 1896 Mubarak ibn Sabah secured the throne of the principality by the murder of his brothers, and interested parties made strenuous efforts both with the Porte and with Muhammad ibn Rashid to secure the chastisement of the usurper..... Mubarak turned to Great Britain, who declined to assume the responsibility of his protection; but in 1898 the matter was reconsidered in the light of British interests, when it became known that a Russian syndicate was endeavouring to secure a concession for the construction of a railway from the Mediterranean to the head of the Persian Gulf. Fortune favoured Mubarak, and in the following year he signed with Great Britain an agreement on the lines of those already in force at Bahrein and Masqat, by which his territories became inalienable except to Great Britain....."

p.170. "In February 1901 Mubarak's force met Ibn Rashid.... and was defeated with heavy loss..... Ibn Rashid took up the offensive, and launched an attack against Jahra near Kuwait. Mubarak, however, received a certain amount of moral, if not material, support from the British, and the opportune presence of a warship hastened the departure of the Shammar forces. Ibn Rashid spared no effort to secure Turkish assistance for his campaign, but the Turks were nervous of taking any action at the head of the Gulf which might provoke active intervention by Great Britain at a moment when they were in active negotiation with Germany for the construction of a railway linking Constantinople with the Persian Gulf....."

p.184. "Turkey, far from weary of the struggle, was now receiving every encouragement from Germany to strike out on a policy of imperial consolidation, if not of expansion. At the beginning of the century Arabia had been innocent of railways, but in 1900 a German commission had visited Kuwait in the interests of the "economic" development of the backward provinces of the Turkish Empire, only to find itself stymied by the agreement of the preceding year between Shaikh Mubarak and Great Britain. Another scheme, however, commended itself in the following year, when Sultan 'Abdul Hamid, again with German support and encouragement, issued a decree for the construction of a railway from Damascus to the Hijaz for the "facilitation of the pilgrimage to Mecca", and himself handsomely headed the list of voluntary subscriptions which was immediately opened to finance the project. Work was not actually begun on the Hijaz Railway until 1904, the year of Ibn Sa'ud's recovery of the Qasim, but meanwhile Great Britain, unable to interfere in northern and western Arabia,

had not been idle in the Persian Gulf to stem the tide of rival penetration...."

p.215f. "By the end of the nineteenth century, Turkey... had been encouraged by the example of other Powers striving for political advantages in the Near East to make on her own account a serious bid for the strengthening and rejuvenation of her own Empire. And no single act of the Ottoman authorities at this period was fraught with more far-reaching possibilities than the decision to build a strategic railway from Damascus, destined in due course to be linked up with the projected Constantinople-Baghdad line, to the Hijaz. Acting under the convenient cover of religious zeal for the comfort of pilgrims making the arduous journey to the holy cities of Islam, 'Abdul Hamid launched his Hijaz Railway prospectus with a pious call for voluntary subscriptions from all parts of the Islamic world at the beginning of the twentieth century; and in 1901 the order was given for the construction of the line, which was actually begun under the supreme direction of the German Meissner Pasha in 1904. Naturally every obstacle was placed in the way of the scheme by the Badawin on the way, who saw in it a serious danger to the continuance of their time-honoured rights of levying blackmail on the old pilgrim routes, and by Sharif 'Aun, who envisaged the unwelcome prospect of being subjected to the closer control of the Sublime Porte. Nevertheless the railway actually reached Madina in 1908, and the Turks, apparently exhausted by their effort, lost an opportunity of putting an end for ever to their troubles in the Hijaz with the decision to suspend work on the last lap of the line from Madina to Mecca. 'Aun al Rafiq had died in 1905, but his nephew and successor, 'Ali Pasha, the son of 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Aun, had continued his policy of obstructing the railway project. At the end of 1907 he was summarily dismissed from his post and sent to reside in exile at Cairo, where he has lived in retirement ever since.... in his place 'Abdillah, yet another of the sons of Mohammad ibn 'Aun, was appointed only to die on his way to take up his post in the following year. 'Abdul Hamid now resorted to a "safe" appointment...Husain was the eldest son of 'Ali, second son of Mohammad ibn 'Aun....He was already nearly sixty years of age when he was nominated to the vacant Amirate of Mecca in 1908...He began his period of office with exemplary restraint, gaining the good opinion both of his own subjects and of the Turks. He discouraged any idea of bringing the railway nearer to his own den, but otherwise he showed himself a loyal and capable vassal of the Turkish Government....."

p.236. "The Red Sea and the Suez Canal had, of course, from the beginning of the war with Turkey been sources of grave anxiety to the British Commander, Sir J. Maxwell; the latter was threatened with attack, while the former, if neglected, could readily be sown with mines transported by way of the Hijaz Railway to 'Aqaba and other points on the coast; and the responsibility for countering the possible moves of the enemy was so divided as to make effective action impossible, while the Turks, besides having the railway at their disposal, had four divisions scattered about the provinces of the Hijaz,

'Asir and Yaman. In these circumstances it was decided early in 1915 that the Egyptian and Indian spheres of operation should be more clearly defined, and, while the Indian authorities were left for the time being to look after the Yaman and 'Asir, Sir Henry MacMahon became definitely responsible for directing the mainly political operations in the Red Sea as far south as Jidda. The consequence was the inception of a long correspondence with Sharif Husain of Mecca, which ended in June 1916 with the raising of the standard of revolt by the Arabs of the Hijaz..."

29:24: "THROUGH THE FORBIDDEN LAND".

I recently came across a marvellous travelogue called: "Through the Forbidden Land: Journeys in Disguise through Soviet Central Asia", by Gustav Krist, translated by E.O. Lorimer and published by the Readers Union Ltd., by arrangement with Faber & Faber, 1939.

Krist was an Austrian soldier who had, during the First World War, been captured somehow, somewhere, and had survived forced labour in harsh conditions in obscure parts of trans-Caspian Asia. During this period he seems to have survived, or adapted, by "going native" to some extent. This book seems to be the sequel to another called "Pascholl, Plenny ! Prisoner in the Forbidden Land". There is no date, but from internal evidence it seems to have been written about Krist's travels over a period of 16 months, in various disguises, during 1925/6, and may have been written - or, more likely, translated - in 1936. The story is quite hair-raising in its account of the primitive brutality and casual violence of the area. All I can say is that it really gripped me, and I should like to quote excerpts from it here, even though not all have to do specifically with railways and even though the area covered is just off the normal definition of "Middle East". After all, you are unlikely to read this stuff otherwise !

p.48. ("At Qizil Arwat)...I took two tickets, and Khores and I mounted the train bound for Charjui, some 500 miles away, the then Capital of the Turkmenistan Soviet Republic. The incredible cheapness of travel on the Russian railways took my breath away. For a journey rather longer than from Vienna to Lake Constance I paid 31 roubles apiece - say, about £2 19s., for our seats in an express train. This sum gave us a right to a sleeping place and indefinite supplies of boiling water for tea.

p.69. "(From Charjui) I took two tickets to Samarquand.....After a journey of nearly 14 hours, past Qaghan and Katta Qurghan, we reached the former capital of Timur and the capital of the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, about 232 miles distant from Charjui. The Turkistan trains crawl incredibly slowly though the desert. The sleepers are simply laid flat in the sand, and since no renewals or repairs have been done to the permanent way since 1914 the trains are obliged to creep along the lines with the utmost caution, though these are laid as straight as a die and curves are almost non-existent.

p.98. It was an unpleasant surprise on reaching Khoqand that the Soviet authorities had sent the cart, horse and supplies of fodder via Skobelev to Sukhana on the Qizil Qaya railway, which branches off to the south about half-way between Khoqand and Andijan.....There was nothing to be done but to take the train to Gorchakovo, the junction for Sukhana. I had to wait three days till the train coughed its way slowly in. When at last we started I was so exhausted by the heat that I fell asleep in the carriage in spite of the racket made by my Sart fellow travellers. I woke to my horror at Fechenko, having overshot my station. I didn't feel like waiting another three days for a return train to Gorchakovo, so I hired a carriage to do the 25½ miles back. When I got to Gorchakovo I found that I was in luck for once, for a train was starting next day for Skobelev and Qizil Qayan.

The small-gauge railway rattled through a barren valley southwards towards the Alai mountains.....After a run of about 4 hours our tiny train drew up in Sukhana. During the War some thousands of Austrians, Hungarians and Germans had been sent to work in the Qizil Qaya coal-mines and hundreds of prisoners had died from hunger and sickness in the province of Ferghana.

p.194: From Qara Kul I proceeded some fifty miles by rail to Bukhara. The railway runs in an absolutely straight line to the small "qishlaq" of Qaghan, which is the junction for the branch line to Bukhara.....In olden days the railway was never used and it had been destroyed by the Bukharans, but since 1922 it has again been in action. Two trains a day run to the station in front of the main city gate of Bukhara. The little train consisted of one engine and two coaches, and it proceeded at a very leisurely and comfortable pace, finally coming to a halt just under the city wall."

p.202f: "The position of the Jews in Bukhara is unique. In earlier days they were considered unclean, and so much despised that they could not even be sold as slaves. They were forbidden to acquire land - they can do so less than ever now under the Soviet regime - and they were not allowed then or now to wear the gaily coloured robe or turban of Bukhara. In deference to the religious susceptibilities of their fellow-citizens they are still compelled, as they have been for centuries, to wear a cap of felt or fur, to proclaim them unmistakably as Jews. They are forbidden to wear the Muslim sash around their waists and must close their cloaks with a narrow hempen cord. They are compelled to live in a special quarter of the city. Within the four walls of their own houses, however, they fling off coarse cap and cloak and wrap themselves in the magnificent garments and silken robes which are denied them without."

A map shows the Jewish Quarter on the South-West corner of the walled city, and the railway station with the line to Qaghan outside the walls on the South-East corner.

p.207: In the Museum made from the former Amir's Palace in Bukhara:

"In the opposite wing the guide opened the doors of a built-in cupboard. A completely-furnished railway sleeping-compartment of the end of the nineteenth century came into view. The last Amir's father had a passion for railway journeys and to indulge it often travelled to and fro between Bukhara and Qaghan. The mullahs, however, objected, and he had an exact copy made of a sleeping compartment. Behind the window of the compartment there was a tiny room in which his servants used to stand and wave strips of coloured paper past the window panes, so that His Majesty might enjoy the complete illusion of a railway journey."

His journey continued through the winter, and eventually he returned via Persia, where he travelled by bus, being held up now and then by bloody civil war conflicts, with the remains of atrocities scattered along the roadside:

"Since Spring 1924 or 1925 a weekly motor bus has run between Meshed and Tehran.

The rattling tin-kettle - a product of General Motors Ltd. - carried me via Nishapur, Sabzawar, Mihr, Mazinan, Abbasabad, Miandasht and Maiamal to the town of Shahrud, where I had to wait for a further bus connection."

(The distance between Nishapur and Shahrud was 375 miles).

29:25:

ATLIT - THE ISRAEL SALT CO.

In the "Industrial Railway Record" No. 138, p.357f, Paul Cotterell has published a letter regarding the Israel Salt Co. His information came partly from Meir Isaacs, now of IR, who grew up at Atlit where his father was Station Master in the 1950's. At that period there were three locos in use on the 2' gauge system of the Salt Co., and two trains were operated simultaneously - one bringing loaded tip wagons from the salt pans, the other taking empties back. The crude mineral salts were tipped out of the loaded wagons directly into a large pit and later scooped out by a crane to be taken away for refining. After bagging into 50kg. sacks, the processed salt was then hand-loaded into main line wagons or onto lorries for onward distribution.

One of the locos was Ruston & Hornsby 175415; the others are likely to have been R&H 186325 of 1937 and 191671 of 1939, since these were 25/30hp 4wD's of 2' gauge exported via agents Siniaver & Sugarman of Jaffa. Another possibility is R&H 18/21hp 4wD 178991 of 1936, also ordered through these agents. RH 432656 & 432660 arrived in 1959, by which time presumably the earlier locos were worn out. (See 28:21 for further details of the destinies of these latter locos.)

Taken from the details recorded in the Group's Photographic Album:

"Formed at Al Jiya, Palestine, early in 1942, as "H.Q. Z Base Depot, Railway Operating Group, R.E.", with a number of personnel from the old 10th. Railway Operating and Construction Company.

Had detachments at Gilbana, Rafa, Wadi Sarrah etc.

In August 1942 became the "B" Railway Operating Coy., and moved to Kantara, Egypt, where it became a full-scale Company as the "182". For a time operated Palestine Railways over the Sinai Desert with a sister Company, under a Railway Operating Group. During this time sent a detachment to Tripoli, Tripolitania. After a short time the other Company and the Group were withdrawn, and the 182 operated the PR on its own. The O.C. (Major R.H. Frankland R.E.) being District Operating and Running Superintendent, Palestine Railways.

In October 1943 moved to Beirut, Lebanon, where detachments were sent out to help the South African Railways and Harbours Company on the Haifa - Beirut - Tripoli line.

In March/April 1944 Company moved to U.K. in two halves, and went to Stratford-on-Avon, from which HQ detachments were sent to various places to assist the civilian railways. October 1944 saw the 182 established in HQ at Southampton, with detachments at Folkestone and Dover.

Again in December 1944 the unit went overseas, this time to Eindhoven and out to detachments to Tilburg, Boxel, Den Bosch, Uden, Schijndel, Veghel, Mill, Oss, Udenhout and Oisterwijk.

The next move of of the HQ was to Nijmegen, Holland, in march 1945, to operate the "Rhineland Military railway"

The final move of the 182 was to Westerholt, Westphalia, Germany, where HQ was established in the Schloss belonging to Graf von Westerholt in June 1945.

Detachments in Geldern, Wesel, Goch, Cleve, Osnabruck, Pfalsdorf, Kranenburg etc.

Towards the end of 1945, men began to leave the Unit for transfer to the Reserve, under the "Age plus service" release scheme.

The unit disbanded in 1946.



29:27: Sculptures with a railway motif were featured in 23:24. Another such surreal exhibit is seen here in the grounds of Belvoir Castle, a Crusader fortification overlooking the Jordan Valley. There are at least five narrow-gauge wagons mounted on short lengths of track. The same female head can be seen at right, though the phallic symbolism is absent here. 5th.