

# HARAKEVET

# הרכבת

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21:1 *In Memory of Times Past: Hartmann 0-4-2T No. 961 (3000/1906) between Tequieh and Souk Oudie Barada, 12/5/79. (Photo: David Scudamore)*

Issue 21 marks the first of another new 'series'; in response to many comments concerning the quality of the printing and legibility, I am experimenting with use of a different printer with a clearer typeface - the hope being that, when it is reduced from A4 to A5 size, it remains clear. It was noticeable in past issues that, when a text was copied direct without being printed on my own little domestic Amstrad 8256, it was often of better quality ! I suspect that any further major improvements will have to wait until I can afford to upgrade my word-processing and printing facilities. Another 200 subscribers or a major sponsor would help ! It has been nice to receive offers of help from abroad, but bitter experience shows that, once the production of the magazine (or anything else) leaves North Leeds, the delays and problems of co-ordination and compatibility can become even worse. As it is, the subscription form had a photograph in the wrong place - thus leading many people to hang on to the form but send letters instead !

In the meantime, here is another issue balanced (I trust) between past and present, though I have little from other countries outside Israel. Contributions welcome ! In Israel the IC3's seem to be settling down in use, the Ayalon is at last partially open, results of infrastructure investment are becoming discernible and the political future of the railways organisation is again under discussion.

Enjoy !



21:3. The View Ahead: Taken from inside an armoured PR railcar some time in 1938-9, during the Arab Rebellion, by a soldier of the Kings Own Royal Lancaster Regiment. (See 14:12 for details of their service in Palestine).

The custom of placing two Arabs as hostages on a separate single-axle extension in front of the trolley was designed to discourage other Arabs from placing mines on the track ! Officially this worked well - unofficially there are rumours that a trolley (complete with extension and hostages) was blown up - but only once, and "it never happened again !"

(Photo: Harakevet Collection, from City Museum, Lancaster.)

NEWS FROM THE LINE.1. Tel Aviv Trams ?

Visiting the U.K. In March, Israel Kessar, Israel's Minister of Transport, is reported to be much taken with the idea of light rail systems. He is said to be intent on pursuing such a transport system for the Tel Aviv area on his return to Israel.

2. Derailments and Problems.

Derailment of a wagon from a ballast train between Na'an and Bet Shemesh on 31/3 caused closure of the Jerusalem line. Traffic had not resumed by the evening of the next day.

Troubles with main line freights on the night of 31/3 - 1/4 followed each other in quick succession. Train 331 broke apart near Rinatya just south of Rosh Ha'Ayin and had to be worked into Lod in two sections, causing considerable delays to freights from Lod to Haifa. Then train 302 came to a stand near the summit between Hadera and Binyamina with sticking brakes. Following freights were held at preceding stations, but by the time 302 had struggled into Binyamina the morning rush of passenger trains was under way, though delays to these were minimal. Continuing brake problems with 302 saw it finally limp into Haifa some seven hours late, with the following freights also severely delayed.

3. Dangerous Crossings.

An item in 'Ha'aretz' on 24/3 stated that passengers alighting at Herzliyya station are forced to cross the line on foot while a train is due in the opposite direction, at 08.11 and 14.11. (A look at the timetable reveals that at 08.11 a fast IC3 is due in the opposite direction, which is no joke). There is no way of preventing passengers getting out on the wrong (i.e. non-platform) side of the train, leading to the possibility of a fatal accident. Local residents suggest the immediate construction of a footbridge. The Ports & Railways Authority's response is that the Authority is in the process of expanding the rail system, and the final position of Herzliyya station has not yet been determined ! The matter is to be discussed, and when the position of the station has been settled the question of a crossing - whether bridge or subway - will be discussed.

4. Preserving Old Stations. May 9th.-14th. was Historic Buildings

Preservation Week, and one of the topics on the agenda was the preservation of railway stations, some of which are in dire need of it, such as Kfar Yehoshua which has had a large number of roof tiles stolen. Sybil Ehrlich has had a meeting with Yossi Feldman, director of the Council for the Preservation of Buildings and Historic Sites, who has advised her that the various railway events proposed for the Preservation Week will be postponed at least until after Sukkot (i.e. late autumn).

5. Improvements. Reporting on a recent trip, Sybil Ehrlich writes that on Friday 19/2 the 08.50 Jerusalem - Tel Aviv comprised but a single coach, but well-filled; the concrete building at Na'an has been repainted a delicate pale pink, with purple window-frames. Tel Aviv station is a big improvement - so much so that some passengers don't recognise it. (A better buffet is still required, though). It is possible to reserve specific seats on the IC3 - e.g. non-smoking, window, facing. One can also book through tickets again from Jerusalem to Haifa.

Riding an IC3 from Tel Aviv to Rehovot, the ride was smooth; passengers seemed amazed at the sight of the train and its luxury ! Stations are announced on the loudspeaker- "Next Stop is Kfar Habad, and after that Lod"; there was no piped music.

6. Double Track. The 6.5 km. stretch between Netanya and Bet Yehoshua was opened to double-track operation at 18.15 on 13/4, without ceremony. This is the first section of operating double-track on IR (the new Ayalon link being presently worked over one line only until signalling etc. is installed and commissioned.) First train over the newly-opened section Netanya - Bet Yehoshua was train 28 (18.00 Tel Aviv - Haifa) made up of IC3 sets.

7. More Accidents. At 03.35 on 21/4 train 302, returning to Haifa from Lod, derailed at the entrance to Kfar Vitkin. About twelve loaded potash wagons left the rails, destroying three tracks over a distance of a hundred metres or so. Cause of the wreck is not definitely known, the wagons might have been overloaded. However, it is more likely that excessive speed was the prime cause. Observant readers will have noticed that this derailment bears an uncanny resemblance to that which occurred on 4/12/92 (as reported in 20:3:5), and it may be remarked that the drivers involved in both these incidents are known 'speed merchants'.

With the main line comprehensively blocked, no passenger trains operated between Haifa and Tel Aviv that day. On 22/4 a shuttle service for passengers between Netanya and Tel Aviv was worked as an emergency measure. The line was eventually cleared for through traffic late that evening, though full signalling had still not been reinstalled by then.

The following day (23/4) there was a collision between two passenger trains at Shefayim. Train 6051 (0600 FO ex-Bat Galim) failed to stop at the starting signal and side-swiped train 6054 (0700 FO ex-Tel Aviv) which was entering track 2 for the scheduled crossing - though there was no derailment. The first four coaches of 6054 (including the recently-refurbished Esslingen railcar trailer 111 ) were heavily scored along their sides, with windows shattered and doors bent inwards. Fortunately, at this relatively early hour on a Friday morning both these trains were lightly loaded and nobody was injured; nevertheless passengers on these and following trains were severely delayed, and there were disruptions to the timetabled services for much of the day.

8. Apopo Wanderings. Apparently two more of the "Apropo" ex-BR coaches have been moved, having been spotted near Jericho ! No further details to hand.

9. Locomotive Preservation. HR Krauss-built 0-6-0T No. 10 has at long last been placed in the Railway Museum; it arrived in mid-May. The restoration is to an exceptionally high standard, with the replacement of missing cab fittings and manufacture of large brass-bound headlamps. It is perhaps churlish to mention that the paint job - almost exhibition quality - is historically inaccurate. The right-hand side tank and cabside has been painted in green, and those on the left side in red, and gold lining has been applied. Nevertheless, despite these small niggles, it is impossible not to applaud the effort and fine workmanship which has gone into this restoration. Special mention should be made of Misha Speisser who has laboured almost alone on the loco for several years.

One thing immediately emphasised by the restoration is just how difficult it was to fire these engines. The firehole is very low down, the fireman probably quickly developed back pains, and there was little room to swing a shovel - presumably firing would have been done one-handed, Swindon-fashion.

#### 10. Timetable Changes.

From April 24th., the Saturday evening Haifa - Tel Aviv train departs Haifa Central 20.24, Bat Galim 20.30, and arrives Tel Aviv 21.40.2

From May 9th. the 05.45 Tel Aviv - Ashdod and the 06.40 Ashdod - Tel Aviv trains have been cancelled - hardly surprising, especially as this train apparently couldn't make up its mind whether it was or wasn't an IC3!

11. Comptroller's Report. Israel has a State Comptroller, Miriam Ben-Porat, whose job it is to review the activities of Government Departments and comment where necessary. These reports are always interesting - as well as distressing, even depressing, since there is no guarantee that anyone will act upon them ! Ben-Porat has just been re-elected to the post, at the age of 75. The 1992 Report was about a thousand pages long, of which 11 pages were devoted to the 'Ports & Railways'. In the Jerusalem Post of 12/5/93 Sybil Ehrlich outlined this section of the Report:

"In mid-1992, 40 passenger carriages, 20 - to 30-years old, were refurbished and air-conditioned at a cost of NIS 13 million, or NIS 325,000 per coach, more than double the original estimate of NIS 150,000 per car. The work was supposed to be completed by October 1989, but in fact took till April 1990. Each carriage was in the workshop for 13-14 months instead of the expected seven to nine weeks. The authority did not supervise the installation of the air conditioners, and it was later found that some of them were faulty. (They are of course designed for buses, not railway vehicles - See 6:3:4, 7:3:4 et seq.)

No study of economic viability was carried out before the opening of the Tel Aviv - Rehovot line in October 1991. After the line began operating, it was found that it loses NIS 132,500 a month, with an average of eight passengers per journey.

The passenger timetable was changed four times from October 1991 to February 1992. Changes were not publicized in advance, and new timetables were not available at information windows, even months after the changes went into effect."

Alas, so much of this involves blatant disregard of common-sense that the most amateur enthusiast could have avoided !

12. By Daimler to Eilat ? According to 'Israel Business Today', Vol. VII, No. 318, of 5/3/93, the German concern Daimler-Benz has expressed interest in the planned project to lay railway tracks to Eilat; the corporation is competing with French, Italian and Japanese firms. According to Minister of Industry and Trade Micha Harish, Daimler-Benz is looking to establish a consortium with a French concern which will fund the project in which roughly \$260 Million will be invested.

13. Another Level-Crossing Smash. 'Maariv' and 'Yediot Aharonot' on 29/3/93 both had an illustrated article showing G12 No. 104 passing the wreck of a car in which 39-year old Yonit Arbel met her death whilst attempting to drive across the line at a crossing near Rehovot on the previous morning.

14. A Coat of Paint. Ramle and Beit Shemesh stations have been repainted what Sybil calls "a peculiar shade of pink, with mauve trim"; apparently the standard of workmanship also leaves much to be desired. The halt at Atar Yasaf is now called Chatzrot Yasaf, and has been graced with a shelter.

15. A Trip by IC3. A mid-April trip showed that there is a refreshment trolley service on the train (serving filter coffee !); all passengers have to purchase a NIS 2 Supplement ticket (pink), either beforehand or on the train. Incidentally, there is a 50% fare reduction for all pensioners (standard Tel Aviv - Nahariyya fare is NIS 16.50, for pensioners NIS 8.50).

14. New General Manager. Yaakov Shen-Tzur has recently been appointed General Manager in succession to the late Moshe Bar-Kochba. From a succession of newspaper cuttings I have received it appears that there are major changes envisaged in the structure of the railways - including possibly the separation once again of the Railways from the Ports. Hopefully there will be more concrete news in a future issue.

15. Closed Stations. No - not a wave of station closures, but it is proposed that Tel Aviv Arlosoroff and Haifa Bat Galim should henceforth be 'closed' stations, i.e. it will not be possible to enter the platforms without a travel ticket. Such tickets will be available from counters and automats, but freedom to wander around without a ticket will be restricted.

16. Nahariya Museum. The Nahariya Municipal Museum consists mostly of photos from the 1930's and 1940's, but a few (mainly domestic) items including a small trolley with flanged wheels that used to run on rails at a farm - the gauge appears to be (rather unusually) 22 inches.

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21:5

CAMEL CAPERS.

Mr. W.J. Sullivan of Rogerstone, Gwent, has sent a memoir of his time in Palestine in the 1945-48 period.

"I was posted to the Haifa area from Cairo - what amazed me was the number of people who would travel on the top of the train. Whether it was because the train was full or to avoid paying the fare, I know not, though my guess would be the latter. They were probably just as comfortable up there as those of us sitting on the hard wooden seats for hours on end.

Wherever the train stopped (in a station or in the middle of nowhere) hordes of locals would appear, selling various items; the noisiest were those selling "Eggzabreead" (i.e. eggs and brerad) - the eggs being so small one would need half a dozen to make a decent sandwich.

On arrival at Haifa, other servicemen and myself alighted. We had been warned to be on our guard, but one soldier with pack on his back, kit bag on one shoulder and rifle on the other didn't stand a chance as a young rogue ran up to him, snatched his spectacles off his nose and disappeared into the crowd before you could say 'Shalom' or 'Marhabba'.

My unit was a small REME Workshops and Recovery section ('310 LofC W/Shops') at Khurdani Camp, about halfway between Haifa and Acre, just north of Qiryat Motzkin, east of the railway line; my brother was stationed there too.

One day our unit had a request to clear the line approximately half a mile towards Acre. This was to be the strangest recovery job we ever had. The train had been in collision with a camel, the poor animal lying across the track.

We had to reverse up the line with the 'Diamond T' recovery wagon, pass ropes underneath and lift. As the jib lifted, the sight and stench was not something I'd care to dwell on ! Suffice it to say, the ropes are still with the camel....."

FURTHER NOTES ON THE PALESTINE POLICE.

Further to the excerpts from "A Job Well Done" (20:19) I have read through several back issues of the Palestine Police Old Comrades Association newsletter, and add the following points - not all directly connected with the railways, but interesting in their own right - to expand on the earlier article:

From No. 136: Sept. 1984. p.67f. Obituary of Captain Guy Lydekker, C.B.E., D.S.C., R.N. (Retd.), who died in 1984 aged 95. "Guy Lydekker enjoyed a distinguished career in the Royal Navy, in the course of which he earned the D.S.C.... When Italy came into the war he was Captain R.N. 'Levant', and as has been described in our official history took command of the Palestine Police Port and Marine Section with such useful effect."

"Appointed Senior Naval Officer Levant Area, I used to call him Admiral of the Eastern Mediterranean - his only ships being the armed launches of our Port and Marine Division when on operational duties at sea. This navy arrangement was blessed by the Admiralty and the Palestine Government to meet wartime needs. Police launches flew the White Ensign while their crew, already holding police and army rank, became also RN Volunteer Reserve ratings."

The funeral took place at Sanderstead, 29/6/84.

From No. 148. Sept. 1987. p.61. Memories from Arthur Cook concerning the final British withdrawal from Jerusalem on 14th., May 1948:

"I was in charge of the convoy leading section, of seven police armoured cars, leaving Jerusalem at about 5.00am., and we took up position on the Ramallah - Latrun road at an appointed place, where I waited several hours for the convoy to build up behind. Three or four yards off the road on the Jerusalem side was an Iraqi Irregulars gun position, and the muzzle of the 4.5 inch gun was pointed towards El Quds, but as we stooped it was swung slowly round so as to cover us, but then adopted its original position when the Iraqis understood that we were on our way and not interested in them. The convoy comprised various army units including Royal Engineers with Bailey bridges and Royal Air Force fighter cover, and also a strong police contingent, of which George Hadingham was in charge.

As the High Commissioner, General Sir Alan Cunningham etc. etc. left with his military escort, the rear party of seven police armoured cars commanded by Angus McLeod fell in behind. We managed to move the close convoy of about thirty kilometres length to Haifa where we arrived at Khayat Beach at approximately 5.00pm."

From No. 164. Sept. 1991). p.14. Notes on a letter from John H. Wonham (former B/M/Sergeant 293) - re. "A Job", p.416 - the attack on Beersheba police station on 10th. Sept. 1938, and the murder of B/Sgt. 440 W. (Haj) Landers:

"I was stationed at Gaza Police Station. The only members I can recall who were there at the time were Jack Reading and a fellow named Bradley. Both were in the mounted section. It was just getting dark when word came through that Beersheba had been raided by several truck loads of Arabs from the hills north of Beersheba and Hebron area. The A.S.P. rounded up about six of us and we set off eastwards in an open pick-up with one Lewis gun and a rifle each. When crossing the Wadi Ghazza, just a dried-up river bed, we were shot at, but managed to get through. We could then see the flames

from burning buildings ahead. We found the government buildings alight and a British police sergeant dead outside the police station with an empty revolver in his hand."

p.47 - from an obituary for Archie Leadbetter: "Archie was posted to Safed and eventually to Salha where "Pop" Douglas was sergeant and on one occasion Pop said to Archie, "There's a riot in the village. Go and stop it." Archie replied "On my own ?" Pop then said, "There's only one riot, so what are you waiting for ?" Archie went and stopped the riot....."

From No.169. Dec. 1992. p.45 - an article by Harry Arrigonie on his return journey to Palestine in August 1938:

"I had extended my three months leave in the U.K. and my passage was arranged by the Crown Agents for me to travel by train, Calais to the port of Trieste, and from there aboard an Italian ship to Haifa. I carried my father's .45 colt revolver from his service in the First World War. ..I declared the revolver at the Italian frontier and when I mentioned to the guard that I was returning to Palestine he remarked "Palestine Tuk Tuk".

Aboard the Italian ship bound for a port in the Persian Gulf, I found myself sharing a two-berth cabin with a major from the Iraqi army. He wore civilian clothes but naturally we got talking and he was interested to know that I was returning to duty in the Palestine Police. I pretended to be very anti-Jewish and I soon gained his confidence. He then introduced me to a tall German the following day who was a colonel in the German Army going out to Iraq. He immediately gave me a "Heil Hitler" salute. I was then introduced to several officers on the deck. Some were Germans and others Iraqi, who had obviously been on a training course in Germany.

On my posting to Hadar HaCarmel Police Station I reported the events described to Headquarters. I am quite sure nothing was done about it. We were too lackadaisical in those days. But most will recall that there was an Arab rebellion in Iraq headed by Rashid Ali in April 1941; he was in league with Germany."

No. 169, p.47. A Memoir from R.M. (Bob) Le Marechal, a former A.S.P.:

"Then came the war and we needed to be even more versatile, because the next order I received was to move south [from Tiberias] and raise, train, administer and tactically command an Arab force to protect the railway from Lydda Junction (to be my headquarters) to Khan Younis near the Egyptian border...."

No. 169, p.52. From an obituary for former Superintendent Patrick Joseph (Paddy) Meehan, K.P.M., C.P.M., who died 10/9/92:

"In the end, he was the last Superintendent of Police to actually leave the Holy Land, long after the actual Stand Down, because he was in charge of the Haifa Volunteer Force for those remaining few weeks following the departure of everyone else."

[Ed: This is one of those brief, intriguing references to the fact that some British forces remained in control of what became known as the 'Haifa Enclave' for a period of almost two months after the official British withdrawal, occupying the stations, railway yards and port area to complete their evacuation of stores after the legal deadline. Information on this period is very sketchy - more would be welcome.]



[Coincidentally, on p.36 of the next issue (170: March 1993) in a memoir from Jim Hagarty, is the following:

"In April 1948, with 299 others, I joined the Haifa Volunteer Force, sometimes known as the G.O.C.'s Force, and we moved to Haifa. I was billeted in Haifa Police Headquarters in the Kingsway which had been blown up a month previously....On the 14th., may 1948 I was a member of the armoured car crew escorting th High Commissioner, General Sir Alan Cunningham, from the airport to the dockside where H.E. was conveyed by boat to H.M.S. Euryaleus, leaving Palestine waters at midnight.

We H.V.F. members continued with patrolling and escort duties within the Haifa enclave. Late one afternoon in compoany with my B/Constable driver and a B/inspector (names have been lost in time), we proceeded to Haifa Airport [adjacent to Qishon Workshops; Ed.] and politely asked the Israeli army to gather up their gear and move off. The airport was within our area of control and was not yet part of the official State of Israel domain. We were expecting the worst and perhaps shot to pieces. But grateful surprise. Back came the Inspector to the armoured car. They have agreed to go. Those words have never been recorded in any history book but they have been engraved on my memory ever since. It would have been very nasty. The Israeli army desperately needed that strategic airport in its drive against Arab forces in the region but courteously agreed to vacate the position when approached by a lone British police Inspector.

We were then billeted in the Trades School billet adjoining the I.P.C. oil refinery and a few nights later we witnessed the savage night battle in the Haifa/Carmel range at Mishmar HaEmek in which some of our armoured cars were too close for comfort."

From No.167, June 1992, p.52. From an obituary for George "Paddy" Craig, died Feb. 1992 aged 84, in Dublin: By Luke Hannon.

"When I first met him in March 1937 he was a law instructor at Mount Scopus [The P.P. Base Depot, Ed.]. Our next crossing was in Gaza where he was B/Inspector on railway protection duties."

p.59. From Obituary Notice for David ("Tashy") Smith, died in Tel Aviv, (By Bill Anderson):.

"Tashy Smith was an A/B.I. in Tel Aviv in 1936/7...after that our paths did not cross until 1944/45 when Tashy turned up in Kantara. He had been seconded or transferred to railway security and presumably was in that position at the termination of the Mandate. He was a Glaswegian....."

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21:7

#### MORE THOUGHTS ON THE SCHIENENLORE.

Re: 18:19 & 19: 20 : Paul Cotterell has sent his opinion that there was probably no need to lift the 10 Ton wagon off the rails to turn it, as there were triangles at both Afule (junction for the Nablus/Tulkarm route) and Beled esh Sheikh (at Haifa - the junction for the Acre line, though this line itself was lifted during WW1 to provide track materials for the Turkish military railways southwards, and it is not certain that the triangle was retained).

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## THE TRAIN ROBBERS

The Cairo to Haifa railway line lay just to the west of Qalqiliya but the small railway station which bore the name of the village was of little importance — most trains passing through almost as if it did not exist. On the rare occasion that it did stop on its way northwards the wood burning locomotive usually had some difficulty in hauling its carriages up the very long incline to Tulkarm. At night freight trains laboured even harder under the long string of wagons they hauled and one could lie in bed and hear the frantic efforts to overcome this particularly difficult part of the track. With the coming of Lease-Lend the goods traffic increased tremendously giving the underpowered locomotives an even harder job than ever before. The resultant slow laboured crawl was a heaven sent opportunity for some of the local bad hats who could not resist the temptation to do a bit of pinching from the open wagons. It was surprising what they managed to jettison before the engine picked up sufficient speed to make leaping off again dangerous. We only saw and recovered the items which were too big or heavy for easy transportation or which were considered to be of little or no use. In a way it must have been a bit like Lawrence of Arabia and his nomadic tribesmen looting the Turkish trains they derailed during the Great War but minus the excitement of blowing up the railway line and watching the engine ploughing off the twisted track into the sand.

We would frequently receive news that various items were scattered in the sand dunes through which the railway track ran and we would go out and pick up the rejected pieces of freight. This could range from a few forty gallon drums of high octane aviation fuel to bags of spikes or nuts and bolts plus on rare occasions large wooden boxes or crates all of which brought into the station and stored in the laundry room awaiting collection by their rightful owners. Many gathered dust for months and some things were never collected.

Eventually someone in authority came up with the solution to the problem and a few armed guards were provided to deter the robbers and the thefts dwindled to a trickle but still continued as and when conditions favoured the thieves. This also brought an end to our own efforts to catch the robbers in the act, for we had started to lay in ambush along the track but with little success for the area was fairly open and there was little cover and in addition with the armed guards now protecting the cargo it became very dangerous since the trigger happy defenders would open fire on anything they saw near the line and in the darkness friend and foe were indistinguishable and no one wanted to be a dead hero. Eventually even the most daring robbers must have thought that discretion was the better part of valour for the spasmodic raids soon dwindled to the occasional quick raid and then ceased altogether then they obviously came to the conclusion that it simply was not worth the candle.

BOB ROWBERRY

Having in previous articles dealt with the standard WD and USATC types of locomotives used in Palestine during World War 2 it would perhaps be appropriate to conclude by listing various miscellaneous engines which were used at army depots during that period. These were not tabulated in the GHQ war diaries in as much detail as were the main classes but sufficient references survive to give some idea of where they worked. The list is as follows:-

No.	1944	Type	Allotted	Transfers, etc	Notes
1	-	0-6-OST	AP 1/41	(WS 1/41;Rf 7/41;WS 1/43)	Withdrawn 5/44
2	-	0-6-OST	AP 1/41	AE 7/41	Withdrawn 7/41
3	-	0-6-OST	AP 1/41	AE 6/42; AP /43	Withdrawn 5/44
4	-	0-6-OST	AP 1/41	AE 7/41; AP 4/42	Withdrawn 5/44
5	70241	0-6-OST	AP 1/41	(WS 7/41;Rf 12/42;Jy 4/45)	To IR 1948
6	70240	0-6-OST	AP 1/41	(Jy 7/41;WS 2/43); AE 2/44	To UK 1948
7	70242	0-6-OST	AP 1/41	(Rf 7/41;Gb 7/43;WS 9/43)	To IR 1948
31	70243	0-4-OST	(AE 7/41)	AP 1/43 (WS 2/43)	Stored Sarafand 1945
37	70245	0-4-OST	(AE 7/41)	AP 11/42 (WS 1/43)	Stored Jaffa 10/44
1015	(72200)	2-8-2T	(Iraq 10/42)	HBT 12/44	Still HBT 6/46
9801	70220	2-6-4T	(AE 12/41)	AP 8/42 (Rf 8/42 & 5/45)	Stored Haifa
9805	70219	2-6-0	(AE 12/41)	AP 7/43 (HBT 9/44 & 5/46)	Stored Azzib
-	70246	0-8-OD	(AE)	HBT 6/43	Stored
-	70248	0-6-OD	(AE)	HBT 6/43	Stored
-	70249	0-6-OD	(AE)	HBT 6/43	Stored

Abbreviations used above:-

AP	Army Palestine	WS	Wadi es Sarar
AE	Army Egypt	Rf	Rafa
HBT	Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli line	Jy	El Jiya
IR	Israel Railways	Gb	Gilbana

Note: In Nov 1942 the official allocation of WD locomotives for shunting at army depots in Palestine was given as: Azzib 1, El Jiya 1, Rafa 2, Wadi es Sarar 1. Also 2 at Gilbana which was near Kantara East on the main line towards El Arish and therefore came under Army Egypt.

Further particulars of these locomotives will be found in Paul Cotterell's "The Railways of Palestine and Israel". Nos.1-7 were the survivors of 16 built in 1929-31 and used on the Haifa Harbour Works contract; 31 and 37 were part of the pre-war Royal Engineers Middle East local stock. 1015 had been built for Mexico but had been commandeered and sent to Iraq in 1942 before being transferred to Lebanon in 1943. 9801 and 9805 were refugees from Hong Kong. 70246/8/9 were some of the sixteen small diesel locomotives captured by the Eighth Army in the Western Desert.

It should also be mentioned that four WD 2-10-0 locomotives, Nos 3685-88, paid a brief visit to Palestine en route to Syria. They were worked through from Suez to Haifa by 193 Railway Operating Company, arriving on 21 & 22 June 1944, and were then run in on trains between Haifa & Azzib and Haifa & Lydda before being taken up to Tripoli and handed over to the DHP Railway on 10 July 1944.

As previously remarked, Theo Pelz's unofficial list of scrapping dates presented in 20:10 has some gaps. After I submitted the published list Theo again contacted me with additional information on the subject which seems to clear up part of the mystery. Theo tells me that the engines long-dumped at Haifa East were cut-up on site in 1955 or 1956. I have gone through my files and photo collection and come up with the following list of these derelict locos:

Kitson 2-8-4T 2 & 4?  
 Manning Wardle 0-6-OST 29 & one other of class.  
 Nasmyth Wilson 0-6-OT 40 & 42?  
 WD 2-6-0 70219 (ex-9805).  
 WD 2-6-4T 70220. (ex-9801).  
 WD 0-6-OST 70241 & 70242. (ex-Haifa Harbour Works Dept. 9 & 10).  
 WD 0-5-OST 70245.  
 WD 0-4-ODH 70247. (ex-Wehrmacht Reichsbahn 3610).  
 WD 0-6-ODH 70248 & 70249 (ex-Wehrmacht Reichsbahn 114655 & 11464).  
 WD ROD 2-8-0 70745.  
 HR SLM 2-8-0 153. (105cm. gauge).

I cannot vouch for the complete accuracy of the above list, but believe it to be substantially correct. There are some points arising from it which need to be aired:

Hugh Ballantyne visited Israel in May 1954 and photographed the locos then dumped at Haifa East. he did not get shots of ROD 2-8-0 70745 nor of the three ex-Wehrmacht Reichsbahn diesels. When I queried him about these four locos he replied that they had disappeared - presumably scrapped - before his visit. But when were they scrapped ?

Despite the fact that NW 0-6-OT 40 and the two MW 0-6-OST's were definitely among the dumped engines in 1954 (they were photographed by Hugh), they are shown in 20:10 as finally being scrapped later than 1955-56. These three appear to have escaped the scrapping spree of the mid-1950's; but why ? The same query applies to the Kitson 2-8-4T No. 4 - assuming that this locos was, indeed, among those dumped.

In short, while the above notes may provide some speculative clarification on several points, they also highlight the numerous questions which remain to be definitively answered on the subject of steam loco scrapping dates.

#### 21: 11 MORE NEWS OF THE ISRAEL MODEL RAILWAY CLUB.

No sooner had Issue 20 gone to press when a letter from Uri Ben-Rehav brought mixed news of their "underground activities".

Readers will recall that the railway authorities, in their wisdom, evicted the Israel Model Railway Club from its home in a shelter near Tel Aviv Darom station during the last days of the Gulf War, two years ago; a promise was made that a new site would be made available at the Merkaz (Arlosoroff or Savidor) station. After a lot of promises, Moshe Bar-Kochba was due to sign a confirmatory document on the very day he suddenly died ! The new management have kept up the tradition of making delaying promises.

In the meantime Moshe Rosen (see 17:8), a member of Kibbutz Netzer Sereni, has persuaded the Kibbutz to put at the club's disposal an unused shelter to act as a Clubroom. A home again at last ! This is in a grove of old pine trees some way from the centre of the Kibbutz. The room itself is 6.32m x 5.41m, and the club is now planning a new layout, probably to incorporate both A.C. and D.C. tracks.

All Harakevet readers are welcome there, any Friday afternoon, around 4pm., for a good cup of tea and a chat.

From: "Palestine Diary" by Lt.Col. F.H. Kisch. C.B.E., D.S.O.  
(published by Vistor Gollancz, London, 1938).

Kisch was the Chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive from 1923 to 1931, based in Jerusalem but traveling widely in connection with development work on the colonies, internal politics within the Zionist organisation, and negotiations with the Civil Administration.

The following excerpts deal not only with railways but with other aspects of the industrialisation of Palestine, provision of roads, air and port facilities, electric power etc., and some of the politics that affected these developments at the time.

1923.

p.28. Jan. 28th. Visited Kalendia with Dr. Thon and examined the site of the proposed aerodrome. Found that it was possible to site the aerodrome as to inflict very little injury on the colony, whereas the siting proposed by the Government takes up the best part of the settlement's land. On return wrote a stiff letter to the Government on the subject.

p.29. Feb. 2nd. To Tel Aviv by train. At Lydda dashed across the platform to greet Prof. Albert Einstein. Found him rather tired as he had sat up all night, but I learned later that this was his own fault, as he had insisted on travelling second-class in spite of every effort to persuade him to go into a wagon-lit which had been reserved for him.

Feb. 3rd. Much excitement in Tel Aviv owing to the visit of Palmer, Government expert on harbours. I deliberately refrained from giving any opinion, taking the line that the issue of Jaffa versus Haifa is no concern of mine. All the big guns of Tel Aviv were, of course, brought to bear on the unfortunate Palmer in favour of Jaffa, and he has been overwhelmed with memoranda and advice.

[This was Sir Frederick Palmer, of Rendel, Tritton and Palmer, Consulting Engineers, who in the 1930's were responsible for the design and construction of the new Haifa harbour].

p.31. Feb. 14th. 7.30. Saw Einstein off at Jerusalem station; asked him to let us know if during his tour he had observed that we were doing anything which in his opinion we should not do, or if we were leaving undone things which should be done. He answered: "Ramassez plus d'argent". [Collect more money !]

p.36. May 15th. Drove to Ramle for the first Aerial Exhibition in Palestine, which was well arranged and gave a splendid impression of the efficiency of the Air Force in this country.

p.62. June 10th. Drove to Jaffa to see Rutenberg... A few of the street lights in Tel Aviv were today lit for the first time from his Power Station which gave him (and me) great satisfaction, although Tel Aviv presented little political difficulty. However, in Jaffa also he has made real progress, and his standards and transformer stations are to be seen all over the town.

p.64. June 20th. 8.15 a.m. To the station to say goodbye to His Excellency who left with Lady Samuel and Miss Franklin for three months' leave.

p.74. October 11th. ...Assam Bey, the Mayor of Jaffa, came in. I told him that it was absurd that Jaffa should be making politics of electric power, and that the Jaffa tradesmen should have to shut their shops at five o'clock while Tel Aviv shop windows dazzle the eyes with their lighting until several hours later. He agreed cordially and said that he hoped some settlement would soon be reached.

p.76. October 19th. A deputation of farmers from Lower Galilee submitting a memorandum asking for the construction of a network of roads in their district. An excellent memorandum with an excellent proposal, but where to find the money. It is useless to hope that the present Government will construct roads in purely Jewish districts....

October 26th. Up at 3 a.m. to catch the first train for Haifa.... At Haifa I was told about the arrest of Ismail Bey Nusrat, the favourite contractor of the Railway management. He is now out on bail and it is not yet known what charges are being brought against him.

At Bat-Galim there are now some forty houses built or building. When I was there six months ago dealing with the questions of title-deeds there was not a stone on the sand!

11am. Drove out to the Quarantine Lazaret. A new Manager, a Welshman, has just been installed and is showing great activity and handling the immigrants with sympathy. He has issued mattresses to third-class immigrants which was never done before; he has put up a tent for the cooks who hitherto slept in the kitchen, (!), etc. These overdue innovations follow a visit last week by the High Commissioner to whom I had complained bitterly on the subject.

p.78. October 27th. Lifschitz, Secretary of the local Jewish Community. (i.e. Haifa). Most of the conversation was devoted to the alleged iniquities of the railway administration, which I am trying to investigate. This is a matter of primary importance, because under the present regime no railway contract is ever given to a Jew, and Jewish officials are gradually being squeezed out of the administration.

p.79. October 28th. I drove to Tiberias...[and]..received a satisfactory account of a municipal meeting which had decided almost unanimously to accept Rutenberg's electricity.

October 30th. ..I motored to Nazareth to lunch with Badcock, the Sub-District Governor. He expressed doubts as to whether Nazareth would agree to let Rutenberg work there; he said, "they all want it, but are afraid of Jerusalem", referring to the Moslem-Christian Association, which is dominated by the Jerusalem Mufti.

p.80. Nov. 5th. Spent an hour with the Chief Secretary....we also spoke about facilities for Sabbath observance by Jews in Government service. Clayton was clearly distressed that the railway administration had landed him in an awkward position in this connection.

p.81. November 8th. A surprise visit at my office in the afternoon in the person of Col. Holmes (General Manager, Palestine Railways), who came to discuss the question of Sabbath observance for railway employees. I showed him Article 23 of the Mandate ["The Administration of Palestine shall recognize the holy days of the respective communities in Palestine as legal days of rest for the members of such communities"] which was new to him. It is amazing that high Government officials, heads of departments, should not be acquainted with the statutory foundation for their presence in the

country. We discussed the problem at length, but it appears almost impossible to find a solution which will meet Jewish requirements, and at the same time not unduly prejudice the economic running of the railways. Obviously transportation cannot cease on Saturday any more than lighting or water supply. Then there is the complication that the Egyptian Railways have their weekly reduced services on Sunday, on which day the Canal Ferry at Kantara takes its weekly rest. Another point concerns the workshops: as anyone who has had charge of a large shop knows, machinery must be rested and cleaned once a week, and in view of the reduced service on Sunday, that is the best day for resting the shops. I myself feel that provided no general public official announcement is made in a spirit contrary to Article 23 of the Mandate, and provided no individual Jew is compelled to work on Saturday against his will, we cannot press for any further recognition of the Sabbath in the railway system. As I told the Vaad Leumi a couple of nights ago - (and it was very ill received) - in a hundred per cent Jewish State we would be obliged to run all essential services by Jews on Sabbaths and Holidays.

p.87. December 20th. After lunch I had a long conversation with General Burnett-Stuart, Director of Military Operations and Intelligence at the War Office. He said that once the British Government have undertaken a commitment for security in Palestine, they should do the thing properly, and strive to enable the country to stand on its own feet as soon as possible. He means particularly to insist on the early development of arterial roads.

p.88. December 27th...A visit from Pevsner who told me that all Haifa is watching the proceedings now in progress against Achmet Nusrat. The feeling is that whatever the result of the trial, this firm's virtual monopoly of contracts under the Palestine Railways is finished for ever. So it ought to be, but Government ought also to hold an enquiry as to how far the Management of the Railways is involved.

#### 1924.

p.90. January 3rd. We must find a way of dealing with the beggars at the Wailing Wall. It seems a trifle compared with many of our troubles, but Straus is the third visitor of importance who has recently complained on the subject. This is a matter for the Vaad Leumi and the police jointly.

p.91. January 12th. During the day learnt that the Achmet Nusrat case at Haifa has ended with the acquittal of Achmet Nusrat and three months' imprisonment for his partner, Ismail Nusrat. The acquittal of Achmet is a great personal triumph for Sacher who is said to have conducted a brilliant defence. Everyone is waiting for the Government to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the responsibility - if any - of the Railway Management in regard to the various questionable transactions which have come to light.

p.100. Feb. 4th. In Amman - Torrents of rain and part of the town completely cut off.

February 5th. Left Amman by courtesy of the High Commissioner in his special train proceeding north via Deraa and Samakh taking our cars with us, the road having now become impassable. Reached 'Affula about 4pm., thence by car to Jerusalem where we arrived at 10 o'clock, very cold and tired.

February 11th. Reached Haifa by train at 8pm., and went directly to the Technicum for the first meeting of the new Committee of Management.

p.114. April 17th. Dizengoff came in after an interview which I arranged for him with the Chief Secretary about the Tel Aviv jetty. This is most important for Tel Aviv, as the prospects of a port at Haifa are already diverting commercial initiative from Jaffa and Tel Aviv. I think the opposition from the Government is mainly due to fear that the jetty may compete with rail transport from Haifa to Jaffa, but it is monstrous for this reason to refuse to allow facilities for landing heavy material required actually at Tel Aviv.

(footnote: It was not until after the riots of 1936 and the closing of Jaffa port for many months that the Government allowed Tel Aviv to construct a jetty). (See below, June 18)

p.115. April 22nd. Shmarya Levin arrived by the midday train for our meeting in the afternoon.....

p.118f. May 7th. Wing-Commander Hubbard of the Air Force called to express his satisfaction at the final settlement of the Kalendia question as regards the siting of the aerodrome and of the village buildings. He has now arranged for the question of compensation to be taken up, and asked me to submit our claim in writing. It has been most difficult to reconcile the conflicting interests of the R.A.F. and the settlers.

p.122. May 22nd. Left for Syria at 2pm., reaching Tiberias at 7 pm. Good going.

p.127. June 10th. Interview with the Chief Secretary with whom I discussed my recent visit to the Metulla area. For military and administrative reasons the Government are as anxious as we are for the construction of a road and telegraph line to Metulla from Rosh Pinah, but Clayton says there is no possibility of finding the money.

(Note: Both road and telegraph were subsequently rushed through by Lord Plumer at the time of the Druse revolt in Syria - see below).

p.129. June 18th. 10am. Interview with H.E. [His Excellency, the High Commissioner], at which Dizengoff was present, on the subject of the Tel Aviv jetty. (see above, April 7th.) H.E. opposed the proposal very strongly, stating that the Government were being asked to spend money in three directions:

- a). Loss of part of the harbour dues;
- b). Cost of maintaining Customs personnel at Tel Aviv in addition to Jaffa;
- c). Cost of railway extension.

We submitted that this expenditure would be recouped through increasing trade, and that in any case the Government were under an obligation to provide better facilities than at present existed for the large commercial community which has grown up in Tel Aviv. I also took exception to the question being approached from the point of view that the project must not cost the Government a penny, having regard to the large proportion of the revenues derived from Tel Aviv.

p.133f. June 25th. Saw the High Commissioner off at the station. no Guard of Honour, and officials especially instructed to wear office clothes so as to avoid trouble and delay in changing. I consider this a mistake. Herbert Samuel does not realize that a certain amount of ceremonial is necessary for maintaining the personal prestige of the High Commissioner, particularly in an Oriental country.



During the morning, Campbell, who is acting for Storrs, called at the office.... I like Campbell, a strong and impartial administrator. We discussed the Jaffa - Petah Tiqva Road project which Campbell is officially supporting as strongly as possible. He said he would welcome any action we might take to help carry the matter through.

(Footnote: Not until two years later was this essential road constructed as an unemployment relief work authorized by Lord Plumer).

p.136. July 1st. Rabbi Meir Berlin arrived at Jerusalem this morning. The strike of taxi, and gharry drivers which had been in force since yesterday, prevented me and others from meeting him, while it also made it necessary for him to proceed from the station to the town on foot. However, he took it very well, and afterwards remarked that the discomfort of having to walk from the station to the city was more than compensated by the pleasure of entering Jerusalem on foot. This transport workers' strike is directed against the Government's decision to raise, and in certain cases to treble, the tax on motor vehicles. It is a remarkable example of Arab-Jewish unity, and there is not a car or carriage to be had at any price.

p.137. July 7th. Tolkowsky came to see me before his departure for London, together with the following Moslem and Christian Arab members of the deputation which will take up with the Colonial Office the question of Jaffa harbour facilities: Said Abu Hadra, Vice-President of the Moslem-Christian Society; Mohammed Abdul Rachim, merchant; Abu Jaban, merchant; Alfred Rock, merchant. There will be one other Jewish member. Whatever the result of the deputation as regards the harbour, this will be an interesting demonstration of Palestinian tri-religious unity on economic issues.

p.142. August 6th. Rutenberg arrived in Jerusalem in the afternoon.... He showed me an excellent design for the Haifa Power House which he had himself elaborated after rejecting a number of plans submitted by various architects.

p.146. October 27th. Received a visit from the President and Secretary of the Palestine Society of Engineers, who gave me some very striking information. They wrote a couple of months ago to the Government complaining that a certain vacancy for a railway engineer was advertised only in the English press and not in Palestine. They received a reply to the effect that experience on English railways was an essential condition, as if English railways were completely different from those on the Continent, and particularly appropriate as a model for Palestine. Shortly afterwards they noticed in the English technical press two advertisements appearing simultaneously. In one, the Palestine Government advertised for a Civil Engineer, who must be A.M.I.C.E.; in the other, the Nigerian Government advertised for a Civil Engineer, who must be A.M.I.C.E. or hold other equivalent qualifications - in other words, the Government of Nigeria, a Crown Colony, is less exclusive than the Mandatory Government of Palestine.

## 1925.

p.172. April 5th. (During Lord Balfour's tour of Palestine):

Departure by special train from Jerusalem at 7.45am., with a party of eighteen and ten journalists in addition. First halt at Benjamina, where we were elaborately entertained...thence to Haifa, where there was a well-organised reception at the Technicum.

p.174. April 8th. After lunch I saw our guest (Balfour) off by train from Samakh for Damascus, and returned by road to reach Jerusalem about half an hour before sunset and Pesach.

April 9th. & 10th.: Thank God, everything went well. While Balfour was in Palestine I was never for a moment free from anxiety, although it is a fact that the mass of the Arab population appeared completely indifferent to the visit. In Syria there has unfortunately been a contretemps, the police at Damascus having fired over the heads of a hostile crowd, killing one man. I am glad I insisted upon the party leaving Palestine by train rather than road, which was because I did not feel entirely happy about the entry into Syria.

p.175. April 14th. Asked for and was granted an interview with the High Commissioner with regard to the suggestion that has been made that the triangle of land between the Jordan, the Yarmouk and the Sea of Galilee should be transferred to Trans-Jordan. This triangle includes Deganya... [this would also have affected the railway near Samakh. Ed.]

[p.180 - a note of interest for British railway enthusiasts, especially those who recall the 1920's 'racehorse' names given to some of Gresley's A3 LNER Pacifics: The Aga Khan in 1925 had a horse named Zionist, by Spearmint out of Judaea ! Spearmint became a very famous loco indeed, her regular driver being a prolific writer under the pen-name 'Toram Beg'. How strange that the name Zionist did not adorn a locomotive.....]

p.198. August 25th. Arrival of Lord and Lady Plumer in Palestine. They were greeted at Jaffa by a small gathering, when speeches were delivered by the Mayors of Jaffa and Tel Aviv..... At Tel Aviv the population, having got over their suspicions of the British Field Marshal, gave him a great welcome as the special train went slowly through the station yard....

The next stage was the official arrival at Jerusalem station, when Lord Plumer thanked the Mayor for his greeting...

p.218. Nov. 19th. The disturbances in Syria are coming closer to our northern frontier, and the Palestine Government have taken the necessary precautions. A belt of territory bordering on the frontier has been formed into a military area, with Col. Bewsher of the Gendarmerie in command.....

Orders have already been issued for the immediate construction of a road to Metulla from Rosh Pinah, which should have been built as soon as the Metulla region was brought under the Palestine Mandate. I myself urged this very strongly upon Sir Herbert Samuel at the time.

p.222. December 1st. ...A deputation from Petah Tiqva on the subject of the Jaffa - Petah Tiqva Road. A fresh effort is to be made to secure the construction of this road now that Herbert Samuel has left, his attitude having been one of steady opposition in order not to compete with the railway.

p.225. [Part of a series of entries dealing with arrangements for the depositing of the Colours of the 40th. (Jewish) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, in the Great Synagogue at Jerusalem:-]

December 17th. Today we deposited the colour in the Churvah Synagogue. I was up early and rode to the station passing en route the parade of ex-soldiers.... There were about a hundred and twenty men in the ranks. The train bringing the colour was, unfortunately, 28 minutes late. The ceremony at the Railway Station was strictly military and in accordance with Regulations. On one side of the station square were formed up the Jerusalem ex-soldiers, who were joined by another fifty men arrived from Tel Aviv by

train. Facing them were Escort furnished by the British gendarmerie, and the Police Band. When the train arrived the flag was taken over by the Colour Party.....The colour was at once brought to the centre of the Escort and unfurled, upon which the Royal Salute was given. We then moved off to the Synagogue, getting away a few minutes after the train had come in. There were large crowds at the railway station and at the Jaffa Gate, mostly composed of Jerusalem Jews from the old Yishuv.....

p.227. December 20th. A meeting this morning with the Executive of the Histadruth and representatives of the railway workers' organisation. The position of the Jewish employees in the railways seems to be getting worse - it was always bad - and I promised to take up the matter with the Chief Secretary. It is also much to be desired that we should create some kind of railway workers' settlement at Haifa to make life easier for Jewish railway employees who have to be content with the miserable salaries paid by the Railway Department, e.g. £4 10s per month for such responsible employees as signalmen and pointsmen. Jews who enter this service on such conditions are really contributing to the national task and have a right to national support. I told the deputation that I was opposed to any subvention in the form of additional salary, but that I would gladly see what could be done to work out some such scheme as I have indicated above.

(Footnote: A large residential suburb for Jewish workmen has since been established in the Haifa - Acre Bay lands.)

p.230. Autumn 1926 - a period of high unemployment amongst Jewish immigrants; Kisch arranged an interview with Lord Plumer:

Government would be prepared by way of relief to carry out certain public works not provided for in the regular budget and to assign them for execution by Jewish our, without tender, provided that no extra cost would thereby be involved. The specific proposal which I asked to be taken in hand at once was the construction of the Jaffa - Petah Tiqva Road. Lord Plumer authozed the P.W.D. at once to arrange with me for the excecution of this work by Jewish unemployed, while he took upon himself to secure the consent of the Secretary of State to the expenditure which was not provided for in the Budget. It is interesting to record that this was the beginning of the Jaffa-Haifa Road eventually completed in 1937, but the earlier completion of which would have so much facilitated the task of the army and the police in the rebellion of 1936.

p.239. Two matters of far-reaching effect on the economy of Palestine were brought to a conclusion by the Government about this time. Firstly, a new currency was introduced as from November 1st. 1927, the standard unit being the Palestinian pound divided into one thousand mils, while at the same time the Egyptian currency hitherto used was declared not to be legal tender as from March 31st. 1928. [NB: Division of a Pound into 1,000 sub-units was more logical than the sterling system of 20 shillings, subdivided into 12 pence each, further subdivided into 4 farthings - 960 farthings being not that dissimilar but much more complex than 1,000 milliemes or mils. Ed.]

Secondly, an issue of £4,475,000 Palestine 5% Guaranteed Stock 1942/1967 was made by the Bank of England on behalf of the Palestine Government in December 1927. The issue price was £100.10.0, and the issue was immediately fully subscribed. Significant for Palestine was the strict control subsequently established by the British Treasury over the Palestinian finances in view of this Stock being guaranteed as to principal and interest by the Treasury. From the proceeds of the issue, £1,000,000 were at once paid to the British Government for railways and other capital assets taken over from the Military Administration, a windfall for the British Exchequer made possible only by the Jewish development of Palestine

from which the service of the loan is derived. Capital expenditure on the Palestine Railways and the purchase from its French owners of the obsolete Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway absorbed more than 1½ million sterling of the loan, but for new work in Palestine there remained sufficient funds for the construction of the Haifa Harbour which was to change the face of Palestine, providing a terminus for the future Iraq pipe-line, and a new point of British naval interest in the Mediterranean.

p.241. [Several hundred Jewish workers directed to the Jordan valley,] where work had begun in November 1927 on the Rutenberg hydro-electric Power Station.

p.244. July 31st. 1928: Lord Plumer left on leave prior to vacating his appointment (due to poor health).

----- To be continued.....



21:13. : Kantara East Station Buildings - a glimpse of the vast array of tracks and facilities laid out here to service the British campaign across Sinai and into Palestine. No exact date - probably 1918. Note trees in the distance marking the line of the Canal; double-skinned roof over one of the wooden huts (to reduce the temperature inside); and several Egyptian 6-wheel coaches parked on an isolated track to Right, used as offices.

(Photo: Imperial War Museum, Ref. Q 15176.)

Carl Alpert of Haifa has sent me a brief extract from his book on the history of the Haifa Technion. From p.79:

Dr. Arthur Biram had been brought from Germany to Haifa in 1913 to serve on the staff of the (then) Technikum:

"During the war Biram returned to Germany to serve in the armed forces. He was on the Russian front for a while, then had himself sent to the Middle East and was eventually stationed in Jerusalem. Before the fall of the city he was sent to Affuleh and became Station Master of the railroad depot there. He could not be responsible for the time of arrival of trains in Affuleh, but he insisted on punctuality with respect to their departure from there, a characteristic familiar to all who knew Biram personally..."

Carl adds that Biram was the prototype of the genuine "Yekke"; he was head of the Reali School in Haifa for many years, and Carl worked with him for many years.

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The use of light portable railways for industrial and agricultural purposes was once quite widespread in Palestine. The track itself was of the sort popularly known as Decauville; laid on steel sleepers, and easily dismantled for re-use on site as work progressed or for removal to a completely different work site. Gauge was almost always 60cm. Indeed, if it wasn't of 60cm. gauge it could not properly be called Decauville.

These light railways are normally exceptionally difficult to track down. Since they were often used on a very temporary basis, and frequently out of public view, little information survives as a rule. Old magazines can sometimes produce a scrap of information, and such is the case here. Both these lines were discovered in the pages of 'Palestine & Middle East', and illustrate two uses of such light railways. They were both worked by hand, as was usual.

The first was mentioned in the February 1938 edition of "Palestine & Middle East". Two indistinct photos show several sections of track being used in the levelling of sand dunes at 'Kiriath Avoda' (Work City). This was described as a "Worker's Suburb south of Tel Aviv in preparation for Settlement", and I think it was in what is now Bat Yam. The photos show that track had been laid in several parallel lines, over a distance of perhaps 50 metres or so, between the dunes and the sea shore. A few side-tipping wagons were in use. The work is described as "Public Works being Implemented by 'Bizur'", a company I have not come across before.

The second light railway was employed for road building by Solel Boneh through hilly country on the "Genigar - Nahalal Highway". There is a photo of this in the September 1938 issue of 'Palestine & Middle East', but neither the photo nor the text gives any more than the above outline information. (I have attempted to discover the whereabouts of Solel Boneh's archives, but so far without success.)

While most, if not all, of the more important industrial sites which employed internal railways have probably been tracked down, the small and obscure sites continue to provide a considerable research challenge. Further information on such sites and their light railways, no matter how scanty the reference, will be welcomed.

[Ed: Another use of course was on archaeological sites, and I have several references to hand-operated tubs being used at such sites operated by the Palestine Dept. of Antiquities. Photographs in journals and books of the period frequently show two rails meandering through an orchard or tubs being manhandled at a factory.]

A new book called "מבט ועוד מבט על ארץ ישראל" (Mabat v'Od Mabat Al Eretz Yisrael) by B. Z. Kedar, has been published. Its English title is "Looking Twice at the Land of Israel", and it is published by Yad Yitzhak Ben-Tzvi and the Israel Ministry of Defence. It costs 78 shekels at Steimatzky's. The book consists mainly of then-and-now aerial photos; the 'then' shots being taken by German and Allied airmen in the First World War. In addition the book includes small identification maps and accompanying photos taken at ground level. A great deal of care has gone into matching the present-day shots with those taken in WWI. The result is exceptionally fascinating, and even includes some colour photos taken during the First World War from the collection of the Australian War Memorial. I thoroughly recommend the book, though you do have to be able to read Hebrew.

Many of the photos in the book show views of the railways. In some instances, however, our preconceptions are challenged by queries, enigmas, anomalies and just plain problems. Take, for example, the accompanying first sketch map, which is based on a map appearing on page 138 of the book. This shows a third (!) alternative route for the British 60 cm. gauge military line in the vicinity of Jerusalem station during 1918. Compare this present sketch map with that on page 16 (and the notes on pp. 21-23) of 'The Railways of Palestine and Israel', where this narrow-gauge military line is described as approaching Jerusalem J&J station from the north-west or as having been extended to run in front of the station building along the road. Now we are presented with a third possibility: i.e. that the 60 cm. gauge line approached the main line railway from the south east. This is all very confusing ! Unfortunately, I have not come across any definitive evidence to decide the issue one way or another. Also on page 138 is a large and admirably sharp photo (dated 3/6/1918) of Jerusalem station and the surrounding area. As is pointed out in the accompanying notes to this photo it is possible to discern quite clearly the 60 cm. gauge military line to El Bira where it runs into the first of the tremendous hair-pin bends on the route; regrettably, the critical section of line on the approach to Jerusalem station cannot be made out on the photo. In short it simply disappears without any apparent trace as it nears the trees and buildings of the Templar (Temple) Colony.

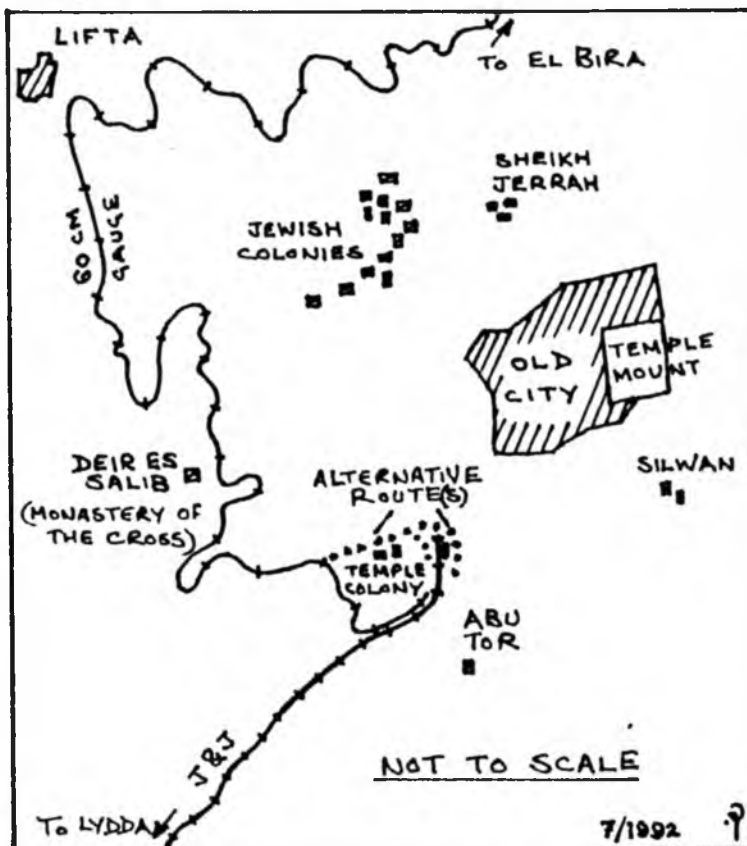
My second sketch shows what appears at first sight to be a previously completely-unknown little 'Decauville Railway'. It is based on the map appearing on p. 160 of "Looking Twice..."; this map is stated to be German, dated 12/8/1918, though if this is so then it may legitimately be asked why there are notations in English. Wilhelma is now called Bnei-Atarot, and the basic strip-plan layout of the settlement has changed remarkably little over the last seventy-five years. The published WWI aerial photo of Wilhelma is dated 17/12/1917, less than a month after the British had conquered the settlement on 21/11/1917. The photo, therefore, shows no trace of the 'Decauville Railway' since the British had not yet built any lines north of Lydda at this date, and we only have the map to go on.

Wilhelma was a German colony as, of course, the name implies (It was named after Kaiser Wilhelm.) Its inhabitants were removed to Egypt by the British. On 27/11/1917 the Turkish forces attempted to retake the place but were beaten off. It seems to have been an intense battle for the British lost 93 men in the engagement (enemy losses are unknown to me). The defeat at Wilhelma cost General Kress von Kressenstein his command of the Turkish Eighth Army, which may reflect the importance of this battle.

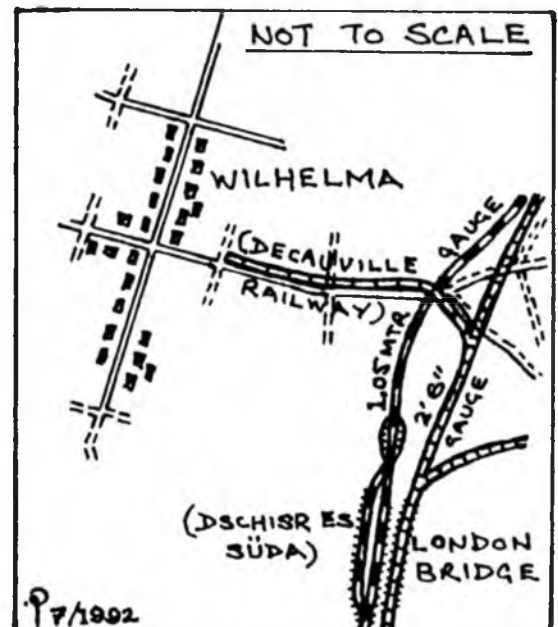
My interpretation of the map is that the so-called 'Decauville Railway' was a short branch off the 2' 6" gauge military line laid by the British early in 1918 alongside the 1.05 metre gauge railway laid by the Turks from Tulkarm southwards in 1915. The term 'Decauville' is usually taken to mean a light railway of 60 cm. gauge and it is possible that the Germans, by now evicted from Wilhelma, mistook the 2' 6" for 60 cm. gauge. I suppose that this branch was laid to supply the British forces garrisoned in Wilhelma. The map does clear up one question: that the British laid their 2' 6" railway parallel to, rather than on, the Turkish formation. It would appear that the 2' 6" line branching off to the east at London Bridge went to Lubban, with the extension to Tireh continuing northwards alongside the Turkish line - not that I can claim to be 100% sure on this point either.

As I have pointed out before, these WWI military lines are very elusive indeed and the above brief notes in no way provide definitive answers. But for anyone wishing to get to grips with the various problems involved - or who would simply like to see to what extent Israel has changed over the last seventy-five years or so - then I heartily suggest that he go out and buy a copy of 'Looking Twice at the Land of Israel'.

Sketch 1



Sketch 2



From time to time one sees in old photographs of Palestine a narrow-gauge truck being used in some building or archaeological work. Such contractors' lines (of 60cm. or 2' gauge) were quite common all over the world, but one still wonders how they got there or what happened to the equipment afterwards. Jakob Wahrman has sent me a copy of an article describing an experience at "Die Deutsche Festtage in Jerusalem 1910" (The German Festival Celebrations in Jerusalem), originally published by Rabdam (?) in 1911, republished on p.53 of a "Gemeindebrief" (Community Newsletter) of March-April 1992. It describes activities at the large Augusta Victoria Foundation on Mount Scopus. As usual, I shall give the original text and then my translation, so that any readers with better knowledge can improve on the translation should they wish.

"Wie bedeutend die Gesamtleistung eines Truppes von funfzig Kindern trotz ihrer kleinen Korbchen tagsuber sein kann, geht daraus hervor, dass wir eine moderne europaische Einrichtung, die wir angeschafft hatten, nie so recht in Zug brachten, weil der erhoffte Mehreffekt nicht erreicht werden konnte. Wir hatten namlich eine komplette Feldbahn mit Kipplowrys etc. angeschafft, um den Transport grosser Schutthalden bei der verhaltnissmassig grossen Entfernung bis zur Verwendungsstelle rascher bewerkstelligen zu lassen. Der Effekt was klaglich. Die schwachen Arme der Kinder konnten die Erdmassen per Schippe nicht in die Lowrys befördern, die Jungens griffen doch zu ihren geliebten Korben, fullten diese mit den Handen und muhten sich dann ab, die Korbe in die hohen Lowrys zu entleeren.

Lediglich der Gansemarsch mit den vollgefullten Korben, der den Jungens immer view Freude gemacht hat, wurde erspart. Eine Mehrleistung wurde nicht erzielt, dafur sah die Sache aber recht traurig aus, erinnerte sehr an den trostlosen Anblick ahnlicher Züge in unseren Industriebezirken und passte so garnicht in unsere Landschaft. Nein, ich bin fur kleine Korbe, Gansemarsch uber eine lange Flaache, wenn auch dabei der eine Nichtsnutz dem vor ihm Schreitenden aus Muthwillen in das herunterhangende Hemdhoschen tritt und Junge und Korb sich uberschlagt....."

Translation:-

"How effective the joint output of a troop of fifty children, in spite of their small baskets, can be over a period, was made clear from the fact that we were never able to bring into full effect a full modern European installation, that we had ordered, because it did not bring with it the desired improvements.

We had installed a complete Portable railway, with tipping trucks etc., to improve and speed up the working of the large heap of rubble over the quite lengthy distance to the building area. The result was disappointing. The weak arms of the boys



Olga Tufnell, in the P.E.F. Quarterly 1967, pp. 112-127, quotes from this book and the letters of Frederick James Bliss, the archaeologist. This includes:

"When Bliss returned to the site (at Tell el-Hesi) in September 1892, the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway was on the point of opening, but he had walked his new colt from Jaffa in three and a half hours, which he considered good time. All was in order at the camp.....The imminent visit of his brother Will was something to look forward to, who would come on the new train service from Jerusalem to Jaffa, taking horse from there....."

About this time (1893) the Fund was considering what they should do next in the field, and while on a visit to Major Conder in Southampton, Bliss met Sir Charles Wilson...and they discussed where excavations should begin...there was an alternative plan to attach Bliss to the Haifa Railway project as an explorer of antiquities all along the line and twenty kilometres each side of it. Bliss felt this was a splendid opportunity, and he much preferred it to the thought of work in Jerusalem. He spurred himself to finish the last chapters of his book and left London for Haifa sometime after October 2nd.

At Haifa, Bliss met the railway party and was delighted to find that the contractors were two compatriots, Huss and Townsend, "capital fellows and large contractors in Mexico etc. with head offices in Chicago...These are new contractors - they have agreed to take up the line where the old contractors left it off and carry it on to Damascus." As a preliminary survey, the party was to follow up the line to the Jordan, making a trip of a week, and Bliss was to be in charge of the camp and the servants. The original party dwindled to three owing to illness and sundry falls, and five days later they were back in Haifa, because the engineers were suddenly recalled. Still, Bliss had found the trip pleasant and instructive; the men travelled at five miles an hour, and the camels at a little over two....."

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#### PHILISTINES !

21:19

According to "Haaretz" some time in April 1993, the inhabitants of Kfar Saba are "Steamed Up about A Locomotive". The story continues: "The delivery of an old diesel locomotive on Wednesday, at the little park on the corner of Rehov HaGalil and HaMachtarut last Wednesday, has aroused the anger of the inhabitants, who are planning to protest about it.

Apparently, at the initiative of Yitzhak Wald, the Mayor of Kfar Saba, the 50-ton Esslingen 0-6-0D No. 223 was delivered as an interim measure in the preparation of a different municipal 'theme park' involving transportation items - a bus, a locomotive, a boat etc. The Railways & Ports Authority therefore donated this loco, repainted it and overhauled it to make it less dangerous to those who clamber on it. A sign had been erected on the little park stating that "A Locomotive" was to be placed on the site - but when No. 223 arrived it caused consternation because it was considered to be 'unaesthetic' and 'ugly' - "We were expecting something more beautiful, of archaeological worth", declared one outraged local resident ! Alas, the supply of LMS 8F's and Baldwins has dried up....

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could not shift the masses of earth in the shovels into the tipping trucks, so the lads remained faithful to their beloved baskets, filled these with their hands and then did what they could to empty these baskets into the high trucks.

Only the procession with the filled baskets, which the lads had always enjoyed greatly, was spared. An increase in output was not achieved, and in contrast the situation looked rather unhappy, reminiscent of the sad similar little trains seen in our industrial areas, and not fitting at all into our landscape. No. I am for the small baskets, and processions over the wide flat area, even if thereby one of the little nuisances deliberately steps on the dangling shirt of the one in front of him and knocks over both boy and basket....."

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21:20

#### JORDAN RAILWAY EXPANSION.

On 29/11/92 a notice appeared in newspapers in Jordan on behalf of the Aqaba Railway Corporation; Signed by M. Krishan, the Director General of the A.R.C. (P.O. Box 50, Ma'an, fax. Ma'an 41861) it invited international engineering consultants to submit prequalification data proving their ability to tender for the study and design of a railway link from Shidiya Phosphate Mines to the existing railway at Batn El Ghouf. (This is the line which links El Hasa with Aqaba Port). DE-Consult (Deutsche-Consulting GmbH of Frankfurt am Main) in conjunction with A. Toukan & Partners, Amman, has gained the contract. The "Conditions and Instructions for Applicants" state:

"The objective of ARC is to provide a rail link to the Shidiya Mines, to handle the forecasted production of phosphate. The expected annual demand for railway transport from Shidiya will be at least 3.5 million tonnes by 1995. The potential demand for rail services from Shidiya to Aqaba is expected to increase in the year 2000 to 5.5 million tonnes and to 7.5 million tonnes by the year 2005. The length of the proposed link is estimated to be 39 km. approximately, and 48 km. with stations and sidings. In addition, the consultant will study the existing railway system of the Aqaba Railway Corporation (capacity, maximum permissible axle load, signalling & telecommunication, etc."

Clearly one can expect a number of new locos and wagons to be ordered to meet this sort of traffic forecast; the southern section of the Hedjaz Railway system will get even busier, as the northern section sinks further into somnolence.....

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21:21

#### A CHILLY PLACE TO GO ?

In 17:11 mention was made of a "Palestine Railroad" in Texas, USA; now from Klaus Matzka comes a note and map showing a station called "Palestina" in Chile, a junction of the FCAB (Chilean State Railways) Northern Transandine line from Antofagasta to Cerro Negro and eventually on to Argentina, and the Chilean Northern Longitudinal railway from Aguas Blancas and Oriente to Baquedano and Pintados. Alas, it appears that passenger trains ceased running to this place a long time ago, and even the road is open only to mining vehicles.....

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Two companion volumes are: "How Jerusalem Was Won" and "Allenby's Final Triumph", both by W. T. Massey, published by Constable, London, 1920. Written in stirring style, with lots of references to the bravery and gallantry of 'our lads', they nevertheless have a vividness of style (Massey was a journalist attached to the forces) which the official "Brief Record of the Advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force" produced by the Government Press and Survey of Egypt in 1919 lacks.

What follows are excerpts from both books, in turn, relating to railways in particular or to the problems of transport and supply in general; it is so easy otherwise, in our modern mechanized age, to forget just how difficult it was to supply troops in the field, especially when the field was by turns sandy and muddy, yet it was problems of supply as much as anything else that dictated the course of the campaign.

From "How Jerusalem Was Won", p.32, Ch. V.:

"To ease the supply problem a spur line was laid from Rafa to Shellal, on the Wadi Ghuzze. In that way supplies, stores, and ammunition were taken up to our right flank. Shellal was a position of great strategic importance. At one time it appeared as if we should have to fight hard to gain it. The Turks had cut an elaborate series of trenches on Wali Sheikh Nuran, a hill covering Shellal, but they evacuated this position before we made the first attack on Gaza, and left an invaluable water supply in our hands.

At Shellal the stony bed of the Wadi Ghuzze rests between high mud banks which have been cut into fantastic shapes by the rushing waters descending from the southern extremities of the Judean range of hills during the winter rains. In the summer months, when the remainder of the wadi bed is dry, there are bubbling springs of good water at Shellal, and these have probably been continuously flowing for many centuries, for close above the spot where the water issues Anzac cavalry discovered a beautiful remnant of the mosaic flooring of an ancient Christian church which, raised on a hundred-foot mound, was doubtless the centre of a colony of Christians hundreds of years before Crusaders were attracted to the Holy Land. Our engineers harnessed that precious flow; a dam was put across the wadi bed and at least a million gallons of crystal water were held up by it, whilst the overflow went into shallow pools fringed with grass (a delightfully refreshing sight in that arid country) from which horses were watered. Pumping sets were installed at the reservoir and pipes were laid towards Karm, and from these the Camel Transport Corps were to fill fanatis - eight to twelve gallon tanks - for carriage of water to troops on the move.

The railway staff, the department which arranged the making up and running of trains, as well as the construction staff, had heavy responsibilities. It was recognised early in 1917 that if we were to crush the Turk out of the war, provision would have to be made for a larger army than a single line from the Suez Canal could feed. It was decided to double the track. The difficulties of the Director of Railway Transport were enormous. There was great shortage of railway material all over the world. Some very valuable cargoes were lost through enemy action at sea, and we had to call for more from different centres, and England deprived herself of rolling stock she badly needed, to enable the flag of freedom to be carried.....through the Holy Land.....

The doubling of the railway track went on apace. To save pressure at the Alexandria docks and on the Egyptian State Railways, which giving some of its rolling stock and, I think, the whole of its reserves of material for the use of the military line east of the Canal, was worked to its utmost capacity, and also to economise money by saving railway freights, wharves were built on the Canal at Kantara, and as many as six ocean-going steamers could be unloaded there at one time. By and by a railway bridge was thrown over the Canal, and when the war was over through trains could be run from Cairo to Jerusalem and Haifa. Kantara grew into a wonderful town with several miles of Canal frontage, huge railway sidings and workshops, enormous stores of rations for man and horse, medical supplies, ordnance and ammunition dumps, etc. Probably the enemy knew about this vast base. Anyone on any ship passing through the Canal could see the place, and it is surprising, and it certainly points to a lack of enterprise on the part of the Germans, that no attempt was made to bomb Kantara by the super-Zeppelin which in November 1917 left its Balkan base and got as far south as the region of Khartoum on its way to East Africa, before being recalled by wireless. This same Zeppelin was seen about forty miles from Port Said and a visit by it was anticipated. Aeroplanes with experienced pilots and armed with the latest anti-Zeppelin devices were stationed at Port Said and Aboukir ready to ascend on any moonlight night when the hum of aerial motor machinery could be heard. The super-Zeppelin never came and Kantara's progress was unchecked.

The doubled railway track was laid as far as El Arish by the time operations commenced, and this was a great aid to the railway staff. Every engine and truck was used to its fullest capacity, and an enormous amount of time was saved by the abolition of passing stations for some ninety miles of the line's length. Railhead was at Deir el Belah, about eight miles short of Gaza, and here troops and an army of Egyptian labourers were working night and day, week in week out, off-loading trucks with a speed that enabled the maximum amount of service to be got out of the rolling stock. There were large depots down the line too. At Rafa there was a big store of ammunition, and at Shellal large quantities not only of supplies but of railway material were piled up in readiness for pushing out railhead immediately the advance began. A Decauville, or light, line ran out towards Gamli from Shellal to make the supply system easier, and I remember seeing some Indian pioneers lay about three miles of light railway with

astonishing rapidity. the day after we took Beersheba. Every mile the line advanced meant time saved in getting up supplies, and the radius of action of lorries, horse and camel transport was considerably increased.

To supply the Gaza front we called in aid a small system of light railways. From the railhead at Deir el Belah to the mouth of the wadi Ghuzze, and from that point along the line of the wadi to various places behind the line held by us, we had a total length of 21 kilometres of light railway. Before this railway got into full operation horses had begun to lose condition, and during the summer ammunition-column officers became very anxious about their horses. The light railway was almost everywhere within range of the enemy's guns, and in some places it was unavoidably exposed, particularly where it ran on the banks of the wadi due south of Gaza. I recollect while the track was being laid speaking to an Australian in charge of a gang of natives preparing an earthwork, and asked why it was that a trench was dug before earth was piled up. He pointed to the hill of Ali Muntar, the most prominent feature in the enemy's system, and said that from the Turks' observation post on that eminence every movement of the labourers could be seen, and the men were often forced by gunfire to the refuge of the trenches.

When the railway was in running order trains had to run the gauntlet of shell-fire on this section on bright moonlight nights, and no camouflage could hide them. But they worked through in a marvellously orderly and efficient fashion, and on one day when our guns were hungry this little line carried 850 tons of ammunition to the batteries. The horses became fit and strong and were ready for war to be carried into open country. In christening their tiny puffing locomotives the Tommy drivers showed their strong appreciation of their comrades on the sea, and the 'Iron Duke' and 'Lion' were always tuned up to haul a maximum load. But the pride of the engine yard was the 'Jerusalem Cuckoo' - some prophetic eye must have seen its future employment on the light line between Jerusalem and Ramallah - though in popularity it was run close by the 'Bullfinch', a play upon the name of the Commander of the XXIst Corps, for which it did sterling service.

The Navy formed part of the picture as well. Some small steamers of 1000 to 1500 tons burden came up from Port Said to a little cove north of Belah to lighten the railway's task. They anchored about 150 yards off shore and a crowd of boats passed backwards and forwards with stores. These were carried up the beach to trucks on a line connected with the supply depots, and if you wished to see a busy scene where slackers had no place the Belah beach gave it to you. The Army tried all sorts of boatmen and labourers. There were Kroo boys who found the Mediterranean waters a comparative calm after the turbulent surf on their own West African shore. The Maltese were not a success. The Egyptians were, both here and almost everywhere else where their services were called for. The best of all the fellows on this beach, however, were the Raratongas from the Cook Islands, the islands from which the Maoris originally came. They were first employed at El Arish, where they made it a point of honour to get a job done well and quickly and, on a given day, it was found that thirty of them had done as much labourers' work as 170 British soldiers....

However well the Navy and all associated with it worked, only a very small proportion of the Army's supplies was water borne. The great bulk had to be carried by rail. Enormously long trains, most of them hauled by London and South-Western locomotives, bore munitions, food for men and animals, water, equipment, medical comforts, guns, wagons, caterpillar tractors, motor cars, and other paraphernalia required for the largest army which had ever operated about the town of Gaza in the thousands of years of its history. The main line had thrown out from it great tentacles embracing in their iron clasp vital centres for the supply of our front, and over these spur lines the trains ran with a regularity of British main-line expresses. Besides 96,000 actual fighting men, there was a vast army of men behind the line, and there were over 100,000 animals to be fed. There were 46,000 horses, 40,000 camels, 15,000 mule, and 3,500 donkeys on Army work east of the Canal, and not a man or beast went short of rations.....

The Army had fresh meat, bread and vegetables in a country which under the lash of war yielded nothing....

A not inconsiderable portion of the front line was supplied with Nile water taken from a canal nearly two hundred miles away. But the Army once at the front depended less upon the waters of that Father of Rivers than it had to do in the long trek across the desert. Then all drinking water came from the Nile. It flowed down the sweet-water canal (if one may be pardoned for calling 'sweet' a volume of water so charged with vegetable matter and bacteria that it was harmful for white men even to wash in it), was filtered and siphoned under the Suez Canal at Kantara, where it was chlorinated and passed through a big pipe line and pumped through in stages into Palestine. The engineers set about improving all local resources over a wide stretch of country which used to be regarded as waterless in summer. Many water levels were tapped, and there was a fair yield.....

In the months preceding our attack Royal Engineers were also concerned in improving the means of communication between railway depots and the front line. Before our arrival in this part of Southern Palestine, wheeled traffic was almost unknown among the natives. There was not one metalled roadway, and only comparatively light loads could be transported in wheeled vehicles. The soil between Khan Yunus and Deir el Belah, especially on the west of our railway line, was very sandy, and after the winter rains had knitted it together it began to crumble under the sun's heat, and it soon cut up badly when two or three limbers had passed over it. The sandy earth was also a great nuisance in the region between Khan Yunus and Shellal, but between Deir el Belah and our Gaza front, excepting on the belt near the sea which was composed of hillocks of sand precisely similar to the Sinai Desert, the earth was firmer and yielded less to the grinding action of wheels. For ordinary heavy military traffic the engineers made good going by taking off about one foot of the top soil and banking it on either side of the road. These tracks lasted very well, but they required constant attention. Ambulances and light motor cars had special arrangements made for them. Hundreds of miles of wire netting were laid on sand in all directions, and these wire roads, which, stretching across bright golden sand, appeared like black bands to observers in

aircraft, at first aroused much curiosity among enemy airmen, and it was not until they had made out an ambulance convoy on the move that they realised the purpose of the tracks.

The rabbit wire roads were a remarkable success. Motor wheels held firmly to the surface, and when the roads were in good condition cars could travel at high speed. Three or four widths of wire netting were laced together, laid on the sand and pegged down. After a time loose pockets of sand could not resist the weight of wheels and there became many holes beneath the wire, and the jolting was a sore trial alike to springs and to a passenger's temper. But here again constant attention kept the roads in order, and if one could not describe travelling over them as easy and comfortable they were at least sure, and one could be certain of getting to a destination at an average speed of twelve miles an hour. In sand the Ford cars have performed wonderful feats, but remarkable as was the record of that cheap American car with us - it helped very considerably to win the war - you could never tell within hours how long a journey would take off the wire roads. Once leave the netting and you you might with good luck and a skilful driver get across the sand without much trouble, but it often meant much bottom-gear work and a hot engine, and not infrequently the digging-out of wheels. The drivers used to try to keep to the tracks made by other cars. These were never straight, and the swing from side to side reminded you of your first ride on a camel's back. The wire roads were a great help to us, and the officer who first thought out the idea received our daily blessings. I do not know who he was, but I was told the wire road scheme was the outcome of a device suggested by a medical officer at Romani in 1916, when infantry could not march much more than six miles a day through the sand. This officer made a sort of wire moccasin which he attached to the boot and doubled the marching powers of the soldier. A sample of these moccasins should find a place in our War Museum."

To be continued.....



21:23: "Water Express on Desert Railway drawn by London and South-Western Railway Engines."

From: "How Jerusalem Was Won".

TOILETS AND TROOP TRAINS.  
 Memories by Ken Wyatt, of Mexborough.

Ken writes: "We landed at Port Tewfik, from Durban (South Africa), and boarded a troop train. I don't remember anything about it except the so-called toilets - just a hole in the floor ! Everything went straight onto the track - you could see the track below and there wasn't even a spinner or disperser as I saw in later years on French trains. There was a porcelain square around the hole, and no water at all anywhere. I also recall well seeing the men working on nearby tracks and the Foreman or "Ras" as they called them had a whip - and he used it too, on one or two of the workers while they worked. I later saw this often, and it seemed to be the normal thing out there. We entrained to a transit camp near Cairo, and I didn't use the train for some months after that.

The next time was from "Tura" to Cairo; we used the train on days off. Tura was, we were told, where some of the stone had been quarried for the pyramids; there were very large caves there, and these were used for storing bombs etc. We guarded the ammunition dump there, and stuff was loaded onto trains there for the airfields before the big push up into the Western Desert. (I seem to remember we didn't pay anything on the trains into Cairo.) We went up the desert after the big push and I saw the railway went up as far as El Daba, where trains stopped for water. We continued past Sidi Barani into Libya, but I didn't see the railway again there - it may have gone further inland. In any case it was bombed several times and most of our food, and also fresh water, came by the one and only road.

My next train ride lasted about 24 hours, from Alexandria to near Gaza; it wasn't very enjoyable, as all the seats were made of wooden strips - we were told this was because upholstered seats would soon have been full of bugs. As this 24-hour trip was on a troop train it didn't stop at any stations so far as I remember; we did stop way out in the desert for our main meal. The cooks got out a big bath and got boiling water from the loco, and put tins of McConnachie's Meat & Veg. in the hot water; we had a tin each and opened them with our jackknives and ate them with a spoon, with dry biscuits - like cheese biscuits. We didn't get a drink but had water in our bottles; some of the lads made tea with boiling water from the loco, but I didn't as I had "Gypsy Tummy".

Regarding refreshments in general, I do not recall a NAAFI at any of the stations, but they did a good job in towns and up the Western Desert - there was a good one at El Daba known as "Tents by the Road"; the convoys used to stop there; there was another good one called "The Halfway House" between Cairo and Alex., and a good roadside one at Mersa Matruh. I well remember the Vendors at the big stations, who would come along the train; they would have a small bucket on their head, filled with ice and small bottle of lemonade, and would call out "Ice cold lemonade, good for the stomach !"; others would call out "Eggs a Bread", "Eggs a Tomat !" I never had any. The beer we got in the NAAFI wasn't too bad if it was cooled.

People used to ride on the roofs and hang onto the sides of the carriages - for free rides, I expect. I don't remember any overbridges, so it was O.K. to ride on top - in any case, inside the coaches wasn't so good with the heat and that hole in the floor smelling the way it did !"



Tom Norton lives near Llandrindod Wells, and writes:

"On 17th. March 1943 as a young officer I disembarked with the 68th. Field Regiment R.A. at Margil, the port for Basra. The sea journey from Liverpool, with a month's stop at Durban, had taken 92 days. We stayed in a transit camp at Shuaiba, 15 miles west of Basra, until the 29th. April 1943.

The Regiment then entrained at nearby Zubair with its 25-pounder guns to travel to Tuz Khurmatli north of Baghdad. The line was metre gauge and the passenger carriages were reasonably comfortable. The large oil-fired locomotive emitted clouds of dark smoke from time to time - visible for many miles across the deserts.

At Baghdad there was no railway bridge over the Tigris and unfortunately the train ferry was out of action when we arrived. It was therefore necessary for the Regiment to detrain at the station on the West bank; we then had to march over the road bridge and through the centre of Baghdad to the eastern station where another train was waiting. This was almost devoid of passenger carriages and we travelled in noisy steel box wagons, likewise devoid of seats, on the quite long trip to Tuz Khurmatli. Fortunately the air temperature was lower than usual, otherwise it would have been unbearable.

On the 1st. May the train reached Suleiman Beg station. We dismounted and were driven the short distance to Tuz Khurmatli in trucks.

On the 19th. July the Regiment moved into Persia and camped at Bisitum near Kermanshah. About a month later it moved by a devious road route to Quatana, 14 miles southwest of Damascus. There it developed infectious hepatitis and was despatched to a hospital in Beirut.

Thus began a fascinating train journey in a "hospital train" via Rayak and Zahle. The carriages were quite narrow and some had been fitted with bunks to accommodate bed patients. The train was slow and very slow on the steep gradients near Zahle. Some bored passengers were seen to jump off and walk alongside the train! The descent to the coast was so steep that the line had been laid in a zigzag pattern, causing the train to halt, reverse, go forward and reverse again.

Quite recently I was talking to a neighbour who was stationed in Basra in 1943 when I was there. He was an officer in the Royal Corps of Signals, and he recounted an unfortunate happening when his C.O. asked him to arrange for his personal army staff car to be railed to Baghdad - the Corps' headquarters. My friend saw it loaded onto a flat truck and well roped. When it arrived in Baghdad it was still well roped but minus the four wheels and tyres!

He also mentioned that Forces' Mail was sent daily by rail to Baghdad by a Courier who was protected by an escort of two armed soldiers."

Professor Avraham Holtz is preparing an annotated and illustrated edition of S. Y. Agnon's novel "T'mol Shilshom", which is set in Eretz Israel in the years 1908-1911 and apparently mentions the Jaffa - Jerusalem railway frequently. Professor Holtz is seeking to borrow or copy photographs, tickets, views inside and outside coaches, timetables etc.

Since one of the characters travels by train from Buczacz (Eastern Galicia) through Poland via Vienna to Trieste, anyone able to help with pictures of some of the railway stations en route or tickets that would have been used at the period is also asked to help!

Although Professor Holtz will be in Jerusalem in July/August 1993 (15, Meir Nakkar, East Talplot, Jerusalem 93803; tel. 02-733211), correspondence should be sent to: Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027-4649, USA.

The steam pressure gauge seen in the accompanying photograph was acquired during a forage around Qishon Works in 1978. It was discovered among a pile of obviously-discarded items in a shed. There were two other similar pressure gauges (with the initials ESR) strewn around, but this one particularly caught my eye. It was made by Salter and carries their number 405727. So far no problem. But what was a pressure gauge lettered SE&CR doing in a country where no locomotive from the South Eastern and Chatham Railway ever ran?! The only explanation that I can think of is that it arrived in Palestine aboard one of the LSWR 0-6-0s in World War 1. Not that this does anything to explain how it came to be fitted to one of these locos, and I suppose it would be romantic nonsense to suggest that Eastleigh Works sent out a raiding party to Ashford to scavenge for spare parts.

The Gauge has 913 stamped at the top of its rim, so it seems pretty certain that it was later fitted to the Baldwin 4-6-0 of that number, though the red line showing the blowing-off pressure is marked at 170 lbs. psi, which is twenty pounds less than the Baldwins were rated at - another mystery perhaps. Just to confuse things further, a previous red line of 140 lbs. psi has been scratched out and there is evidence that erasures have been made at the 150 and 190 marks. The mysteries deepen.

I didn't return to Qishon until 1986, by which time the contents of that shed had disappeared. In the meantime I had cleaned up the old SE&CR pressure gauge with elbow grease and Brasso, and replaced its broken glass. It now sits on a shelf alongside a few other knick-knacks.



I believe it was during January 1945, whilst I was attached to the 169 Railway Workshops Co. R.E.; I visited a Railway Stores Coy. next to the 169 R. W. Coy and noticed 23 new locomotives built by the North British Locomotive Company. They looked good - 2-10-0's, centre driving wheels without flanges, Pacific boilers with rocker bars in the fire-box; steel firebox and Tell-Tale stays. (The stays had a 1/32nd. in. hole drilled through them so that, if a stay was cracked, steam and water would show the defective stay.) Upon looking over these beautiful machines I felt cheated because, had we had these locos in the Western Desert, we would have done a better and quicker job. Now it appeared as if they would be left to rust away. The locos which had been used in Iraq and Iran were coming into Suez and Jaffa to be repaired and sold.

A few days later I had to pull one of these 2-10-0 locos to the 169 Workshop with a diesel; upon placing it where it was needed fitters started work assembling side rods etc. next day we were ordered to "fire her" (light a fire) and slowly heat the boiler. Two days later we were told that this loco had been sold to Turkey, and Sapper Snelling and I had to deliver it part of the journey to Turkey. Because of wartime security you did not ask questions, but just did what you were told.

Sapper Snelling and I were both R.E.D.s ("Railway Engine Drivers) and also both Sappers.

We started, moving slowly down the line; I drove because I knew all these sidings; everything looked perfect. I tried all brakes, steam, Westinghouse and Vacuum, and found them very effective. Nearing the signal which allowed us onto the main line the Station Master was waiting; as soon as he climbed onto the loco cab I knew what he wanted. Yes ! Would we take a goods train as far as Ismailia ? Now, if you say "No", you will be put into every siding they could find, so we said "Yes, but we need a "Boomsari" (Guard). "O.K., yes boss, all fixed" - and we backed onto a train of 120 axles." We were lucky, the leading four wagons were the double bogie type fitted with Westinghouse air brakes which we coupled up onto the loco. Now E.S.R. Guards are very strange - it seems as if each one has his own rules, so you have to make sure you understand what he means.

We set off, Snelling was driving, and as we felt the whole weight of the train behind us, it was good, plenty of steam, we were surprised to see the Westinghouse Air Compressor cut out at 120 psi and holding very well. Snelling was building up speed and going beautifully at 50 mph. All "distant" signals were off, so it appeared as though they (the ESR) would keep their word and give us two sections clear ahead. Abu Sultan on Lake Timsah looked quiet and when we were about a mile from the station we noticed a passenger train on the down line (i.e. coming towards us) and stopping. I should explain here that the line from Suez to Ismailia is double track. Now, as we flew through the station Snelling was suddenly swearing. I shouted "What's wrong ?", and he answered "Some stupid bastard threw a newspaper or sheet at me as we passed that passenger train !".

I was very busy shovelling coal into this loco, which seemed to run exceptionally smoothly. About one mile from Ismailia Snelling tried the air brakes and we started reducing speed, so eventually we pulled into the marshalling yard at Ismailia and only just cleared the points at each end.

In a matter of minutes the head shunter was ready to uncouple us, and "Would we like a small train to Kantara East?" Naturally it was easier to say "Yes", and in a matter of minutes the signals were 'off' and we had "Line Clear" to Firdan. So we came into Firdan; we could see the bridge closing and by the time we reached the signal; box the signalman had the Staff ready. Now we were on our way to Kantara East, crossing the Bridge with such a big loco was a worry and at 5 mph one felt the Bridge was never-ending, but eventually we were rolling into Kantara East. Eventually we pulled into the marshalling yard and the Station Master tells us we must go into the Loco Shed because we had to go onto the pit. (This is where any work under a loco can be done). I had a good hot fire in the fire-box because I had expected to go on through the Sinai Desert.

Upon arrival over the pit two Egyptian men and a Police Officer came and inspected the wheels of our loco, explaining that a native had been found at Abu Sultan with his head cut off. They believed he was a passenger on the passenger train and had jumped from the train on the wrong side to avoid paying his fare. We could not help them but we now knew what the paper Snelling had seen had been !

We now had dinner with men of the 189 R.O.C. R.E. two men from this Company took the loco to Haifa and we returned to Suez by motor truck. However, whenever I drove through Abu Sultan afterwards I always reduced speed in case of fare evaders !"



21:29. : "Off the Rails" - an ROD 2-8-0 derailed at Kantara East. 1942/3. (Photo: Eric Woodhouse, 182 R. O. C., R. E. )