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הרכבת

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Edited and Published by Rabbi Walter Rothschild,
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*Palestine Railway "P" Class 4-6-0 No. 63 leaving Jaffa Station, June 1947.
(D.S. Currie)*

23:2

EDITORIAL. ISSUE 23.

This issue will appear in January 1994 rather than December 1993, for a variety of practical reasons, but I trust it is worth the slight extra wait. There have been a lot of responses to earlier items, and a lot of current news - not all of which could necessarily be incorporated, as sections are prepared and printed off before final preparation of the issue. However, we have an article on (almost) the anniversary of a major accident, some items on the Mandate and wartime, further excerpts of Allenby's campaign - and more goodies in store !

Enjoy !

23:3



The El Ferdan (New) Ferry across the Suez Canal, 1947.

Four PR vans being transported on the standard-gauge girder mounted on pontoons; To the left can be seen the loading dock with lifting span and the ends of three sidings.

(Photo: D. S. Currie).

23:4

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

1. **CABLE TROUBLE.** On 13/9/93 a bulldozer, which had just begun work on preparing the formation for double-tracking between Central and Bat Galim stations in Haifa, completely sliced through a bundle of electrical cables. This paralysed the section between Haifa Central and Atlit (a distance of some 20 kilometres) and totally disrupted traffic. Practically all telephone communication was also destroyed. Repairs took a week and, in the meantime, emergency measures were in force to keep trains running. Lack of proper supervision on lineside work of this nature has provided headaches for IR in the past, as reported in previous issues of Harakevet.

2. **SUBURBAN SERVICES.** From Sunday 19/9 seven commuter trains began operating between Tel Aviv and Netanya, using IC3 sets. This service has been made possible by the double-tracking of sections.

3. **BOX VANS SAVED.** In August five very old ex-PR box vans were placed on a siding at Haifa East Railway Museum. For years they had been stored in the port area, but were removed to the dump at Tel Hanan earlier in 1993. Subsequently rescued for the museum, they are in derelict condition and will need much work done to them.

Further notes from Theo Pelz: Four of these vans - of two types, 10T and 12T - were built around 1918, and were amongst the oldest s.g. goods vehicles of PR; the 12T van with steel body belongs to the first series of such vehicles built for the PR; the next series was obtained only during the thirties and had steel frames with walls of wooden planks. Three all-wooden vans (even with wooden dumb-buffers) were used at Wadi Sarar in 1941 to bring meals to the guards and change them every four (?) days. Theo recalls seeing them in the fifties derelict besides the track north of Qiryat Motzkin.

4. **ON THE RACK.** Theo has sent some photos of what appears to be a very short (10 metres ?), private rack mono-railway at No. 41, Yefe Nof Road, Haifa, used to take the inhabitants of the house to and from their car parking place !

5. **IN MEMORTAM.** Noted in 'The Jerusalem Report' in October was the death of Shaul Raziel, head of the Israel Ports and Railways Authority, at the age of 64.

New "Mankal" or General Manager is Yaakov Shen-Tzur.

6. **FREIGHT WAGON STRIFE.** According to the 'Jerusalem Post' of 20/9/93, "Israel Industries workers in Haifa have threatened action if a Railroad Authority decision to award a contract for freight cars to a Slovakian manufacturer is finalised. The workers said the contract is worth more than \$25 million.

According to local union head Haim Solomon, the workers are planning to paralyze train traffic between Haifa and Tel Aviv and could close the highway between the two cities.

The Railroad Authority decision, which is not final according to Transport Ministry spokesman Yehial Amitai, would award the contract to the Slovakian firm and its Israeli partners over Israel Industries and its German partner, Talbot.

However, the figures used by the workers are incorrect, according to authority spokesman Uri Ya'akov, who said the authority offered a number of tenders for the supply of freight cars of varying types worth a total of only \$13 M.

Ya'akov said that in its bid the Slovakian company joined with Matar, which is a joint venture of three local concerns - Hatehof, Amit and Keter Freight. The Matar group will be awarded a \$5M contract for supplying 82 flatbed cars.

Regarding the other parts of the contract, Ya'akov said two other groups are the main contenders. One is an Australian firm teamed with Vulcan of the Granit Hacarmel Group, the other is composed of a Spanish company with Netzer, another local firm."

Clearly some major contracts for container flats and, perhaps, hoppers are in process of negotiation.

Fifteen new bogie flat wagons arrived in Israel in mid-November from Wagonka Popard (spelling ?) of Czechia or Slovakia (precise whereabouts unknown as yet). The wagons, actually owned by the Keter company, arrived in complete form and, at 70 tonnes capacity, are the largest flat wagons to operate on IR. Numbers are: 70.301 - 315 'Shin'. They are to be used on the conveyance of chemical containers from the Negev Desert, particularly from Tzefa. A trial trip, at speeds up to 100 kph, was run between Lod and Qiryat Gat in late November over this recently-upgraded stretch of line. A further 35 of these flat wagons are on order and are due to arrive in Israel in dismantled form.

7. DOORS CLOSED ! A newspaper cutting from 14/10/93 tells of a group of passengers in an IC3 from Haifa to Tel Aviv who, arriving at Netanya, were unable to open the doors as (it transpired) the driver had forgotten to press the appropriate button; accordingly they were carried on to Tel Aviv !

8. POLITICS. 'Yediot Acharonot' for 29/9/93, p.16, carried a large advert for Ronnie Milo's political campaign, in which he promised to build an underground railway in Tel Aviv-Jaffa if elected; 'Ma'ariv' for 15/10 has another large advert for Avigdor Kahalani who, in contrast, was promising to build an extensive tramway network for Tel Aviv-Jaffa. How strange, that nowadays it is perceived as a potential vote-winner to be in favour of rail public transport ! Do any such election promises mean anything, though ? For the record - Milo won.

9. MORE ESSLINGEN REFURBISHMENTS. In October a further four long-dumped Esslingen railcar units (numbers unknown) were being refurbished for passenger use. Two were undergoing overhaul by Haargaz (the bus-builders) at Sarafand/Tzrifim with the remaining pair being dealt with at Qishon Works.

10. MORE DOUBLING. The double track section between Tel Baruch and Herzliyya on the Tel Aviv - Haifa main line was brought into public use on 28th. November 1993.

23:5 NEW TIMETABLE. From Paul I have received a remarkable new IR timetable - remarkable because, although it still fits onto one sheet of paper (two sides) it has been reorganised into one lengthy table showing the whole system, 'northbound' on one side and 'southbound' on the other - i.e. Jerusalem-Tel Aviv/ Rehovot - Tel Aviv - Netanya - Haifa - Nahariyya. The northbound side is printed in black and green (with green numerals being used to denote IC3 trains), the southbound side in black and red. The Friday/Eve of Holidays table is shaded and adjacent, as is the single Saturday train in each direction. A further remarkable feature is that, rather than being printed "until further notice", the heading very specifically says "Winter Timetable 1993/4" and "From 18.12.93 until 1.4.94", though with a footnote stating that "More stops at Hertzliyya will be added after the completion of development works". Connections are shown by an arrow.

There are still a few strange notes and features, some stops on some trains being on Sundays Only, though these entries are in (faintly) shaded boxes.

Clearly there is no room for further expansion - when, for example further stations are added within Tel Aviv itself or the suburban service is strengthened - so this might be the last of the 'single sheet' timetables - unless the Fridays timetable is printed totally separately.

23:6 NOTES AND CORRECTIONS.

a). On 22:10: Paul has realised that the return Mafrak-Damascus ticket illustrated was in fact issued at Mafrak - which explains why the ticket is printed in English and Arabic, as it was issued on the PR-operated section of the Hedjaz Railway in Transjordan. Clue is the large 'R' on the Damascus to Mafrak half.

b). On 22:6:10. Theo Pelz informs me that Dr. Auerbach is reported to have said "Palestine is the land of unlimited impossibilities !"

c). Further to 22:4:13, Steve Tish advises that Esslingen 0-6-0D No. 222 is only temporarily out of service and is expected to be returned to service in the future.

d). On 22:17 (and see article elsewhere in this issue): Channel 1 of Israel TV on 3/11/93 showed a dive to the wreck of the SS Thistlegorm in the Gulf of Suez. The tender of an 8F was clearly visible and readily identifiable on the deck of the ship; The loco itself, thrown overboard at the time of the sinking, was not featured in any shots.

23:7 THE SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY MAGAZINE.

In the above-named magazine, the 'House Magazine' of the London and South Western Railway, Vol. IV, No. 40 for July 1918,, p.105, is a full side view of Adams 0-6-0 No. 510A (still with LSWR on the tender) with a camel in the foreground; the caption is "With the Palestine Forces - 510A in strange company."

23:8 FURTHER NOTES ON 22:21: THE HEDJAZ BRANCH TO HAIFA.

According to Theo Pelz, there were two sidings at Km.4.500, namely one to the Even-ve-Sid quarry, which was still in use in 1954, and the other to the military camp (fuel dump) 'next door'. See below.

Paul notes that Jisr el Mejamie is at km. 76.5, not 67.5. Steve Tish adds the following information - down to the nearest metre !! - culled from "a variety of sources". I am not sure how valid such exactitude is - does it refer to the first point in the main line from the Haifa direction ? or the mid-point in a loop or platform ? - which could itself be over a hundred metres long. Anyway - comments welcome ! -

- Km. 2: Actual Km. 2.031. Also known as "Shekunat Ovdim" ("Workers' Settlement") and "Shekunat Ha'Iriah".
- Km. 2.421: Eastern Rice Mill Siding (Dual gauge).
- Km. 4.500: Quarry Siding.
- Km. 4.938: Zur Army base.
- Km. 5.2 : Tel Hanan.
- Km. 6.399: Nesher (Settlement founded 1925).
- Km. 10.171: Meshek Yagur. (Founded 1922) Opened ca. 1925.
- Km. 14.943: Alroy (Hartiyeh ?) (Founded 1935). Opened ca. 1935.
- Km. 16.937: Kiryat Haroshet. (founded 1935).
: Kfar Yehoshua built/opened ca. 1904.
- Km. 26.680: Kfar Baruch (founded 1926) (opened 1929).
- Km. 36.356: Afula (Fula/Fule).
: Merchavia Halt. (Settlement founded 1911).
Siding off main line, according to Paul Cotterell, as per sketch:
- : Ein Harod. Opened 1/9/1922.
- : Tel Yosef. (Founded 1921); Opened ca. 1929.
- Km. 57.019: Hasadeh. Opened January 1937.
- Km. 59.177: Beisan.
: Beit Yosef (founded 1937); opened ca. 1937.
- Km. 76.467: Jisr el Mejamie.
- Km. 78.970: Naharayim.
- Km. 81.413: Public Siding. As per extract from the Appendix to the Working Timetable, which reads:
- "Public Siding at Kilometre 81.413, Haifa-Samakh Line:
1. The siding is situated between Jisr El Majami and Samakh Station and is 91 metres in length from points to buffer stop and can accommodate a maximum of four wagons.
 2. The points which operate in conjunction with a derailing switch are staff-locked and facing from Jisr El Majami and can be operated only by the Jisr El Majami-Samakh electric staff.
 3. Wagons to and from the siding will be worked by "Up" trains from Samakh only.
 4. Trains shunting this siding will first stop at Menahemiya Halt where all wagon brakes will be applied before the engine is detached..."
- Note this mentions Menahemiya Halt, in approximately the spot where Delhamiya/Ashdot Ya'akov are mentioned in 22:21. It is thought the siding served a gypsum quarry.
- Km. 86.989: Samakh.
-

23:9 "BET YEHOShUA" - THIRTY YEARS ON. By Steve Tish.

Accidents or collisions that take place on railways, whether between freight or passenger trains, have always borne a special interest to railway enthusiasts and, of course, the media at large, who have always sought to cover them in their own sensational style.

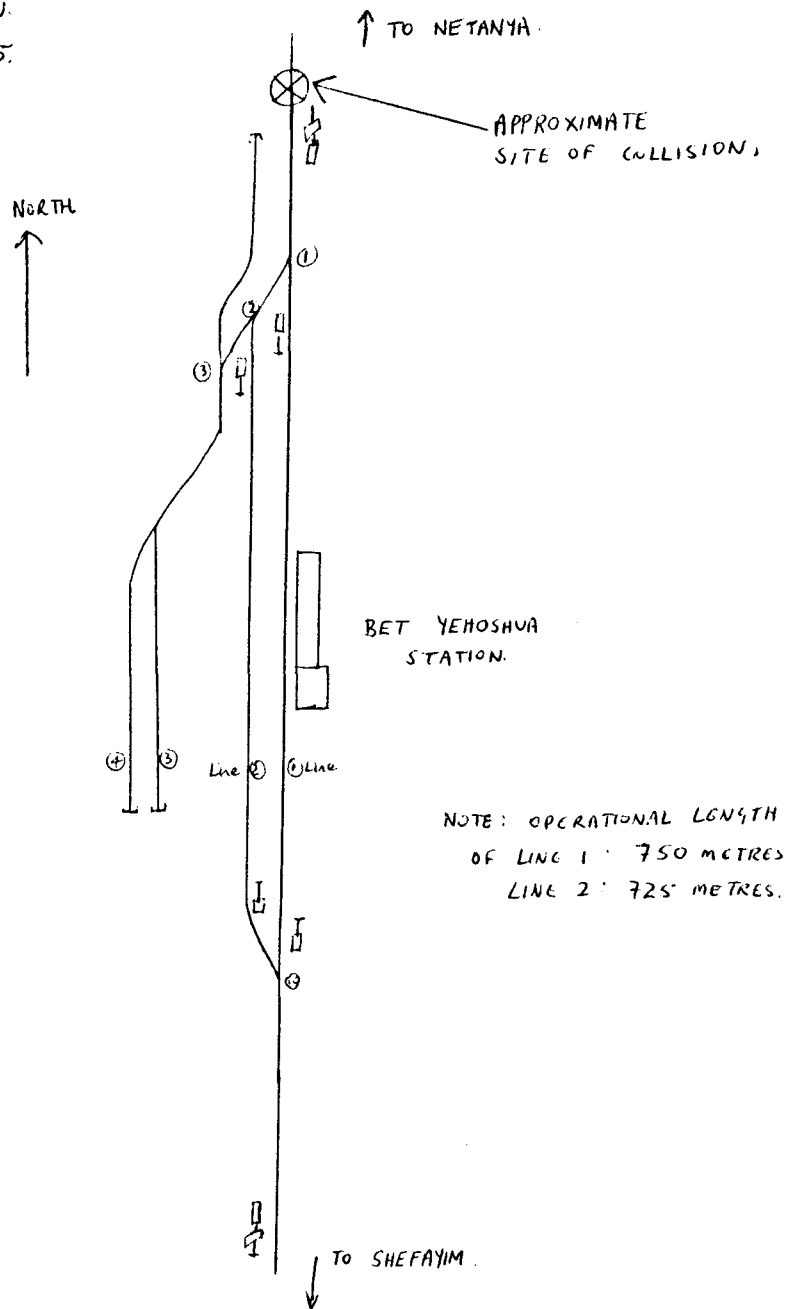
Israel Railways, as fellow enthusiast Paul Cotterell rightly points out in his comprehensive work on the history of the system, do have an excellent safety record. One therefore has to delve back to as far as 30 years ago this month, to trace the most serious accident ever to occur* since the formation of IR in 1948. Since publication of Paul's book more information has come to light, through dedicated research and the kind assistance of both current and past employees of IR. It must be stressed however that most has been gleaned from contemporary press cuttings, and it is possible that a few inaccuracies may have crept in. I would therefore welcome any corrections or comments in future issues of 'Harakevet'.

To set the scene, the date was the 26th. of December 1963, a cold Thursday winter evening. Bet Yehoshua is situated at Km. 72.365 on the main line between Haifa and Tel Aviv. The track layout, prior to recent alterations, is indicated in the diagram. The trains involved were number 49, which was timetabled to depart from Haifa Merkaz at 16.12, calling at all stations to Tel Aviv and number 32, the semi-fast from Tel Aviv which was scheduled to leave at 17.08. Each train consisted of 2x3-car Esslingen rail-car sets hauled by a GM G12 Bo-Bo locomotive.

According to reports, train 49 may have been running slightly late, but all was apparently normal until the trains reached the vicinity of Bet Yehoshua, where train 49 was due to call at 17.22, and enter Track 1. Train 32 was to have passed this station about a minute later, passing through on the adjacent loop, Track 2. This it duly entered, at a speed estimated to be between 30-40 kph, which is permissible for this section. However, despite the loop Up Starter signal being placed at Danger, it continued to travel under power and subsequently rejoined the main line. Train 49 was approaching from Haifa at approx 30 kph, in preparation for its call at Bet Yehoshua. The driver and co-driver of Train 32, upon sighting the oncoming Tel Aviv-bound train at a distance of about 300 metres, made frantic last-minute attempts to avoid the inevitable head-on collision, by use of radio and the emergency brake. In spite of their efforts and those of the crew of train 49 the collision occurred at about 17.24, about 300 metres north of Bet Yehoshua station. As good fortune would have it, the relatively low speed of both trains most certainly avoided a far greater disaster, this in addition to the fact that train 32 (hauled by loco 118) "rode up" on loco no. 105 of train 49, thus reducing considerably the momentum of impact. The aftermath provided a somewhat spectacular sight, with the engine of loco. 118 still running and fuel leaking from the sides. The last three coaches of the northbound train broke free and coasted back for several hundred metres. Neither train was derailed.

Injury and damage were considerable. 54 passengers, the majority of whom were travelling in the reserved sections immediately behind the loco on train 49, in addition to the

BET YEHOASHUA
STATION.
Km 72.365.



crew, received varying injuries, but only a few were detained in hospital for further treatment. Fortunately there was no loss of life.

After the sterling efforts of the emergency and rescue teams, and evacuation of the injured to various hospitals in the area, IR management appointed a team of investigators and engineers to commence an immediate internal enquiry into the cause of the accident, which included questioning the crews of both trains. Upon completion of their work they gave their approval for the breakdown teams to start the difficult job of removing the damaged rolling stock and repairing the main line. The work was carried out by teams from the diesel motive power depots in Haifa and Lod, in addition to a team from Netanya and staff from the traffic department. In attendance were the two breakdown trains from the respective depots. First to be removed were the four coaches which were not damaged, to a siding adjacent to the station, where minor repairs and safety checks were carried out before they could be returned to service. Afterwards, one coach that was completely wrecked was lifted from the track, then three coaches that were badly damaged. A further two coaches were lightly damaged and were moved to a nearby siding. The main difficulty for the breakdown teams was the removal of loco no. 118 from the back of no. 105. Both breakdown cranes were operated, and after much effort No. 118 was lifted off and placed beside the tracks. It was then loaded onto a flat wagon of 120 ton capacity. After the removal of overhanging parts that would foul clearances, the locomotive and damaged coaches were subsequently transferred to Haifa.

Although the financial loss of the rolling stock was quite substantial, (2 locos each valued at about 570,000 Lira and at least three coaches at 120,000 Lira each) the equipment was insured. However, at the press conference hastily arranged by IR management on the Saturday evening, 29th. December, it soon became clear that the repercussions of the collision would be felt for quite some time; as the 2 locos and 2 Esslingen railcar sets had been removed from the inventory, IR General Manager Menachem Savidor announced that as much as 15% of the railways' motive power had been lost. This would mean that the direct passenger service from Haifa to Jerusalem would be cancelled until further notice, with an alternative service operating from Tel Aviv Darom (South). Passengers would be transferred from Tel Aviv North by a special bus link. The Haifa to Beersheba service would also be curtailed. Both these services were sacrificed to enable the freight services for fruit and phosphates (which were at the height of the season) which had to be brought up from the South for export through Haifa Port, to continue.

Mr. Savidor went on to add that normal service was expected to be resumed on Monday 30th. December, and that initially on Sunday 29th. two trains would operate between Haifa and Tel Aviv in each direction. He stated that the line had been cleared by 7pm. that same evening, and from approximately 10pm. the freight service was due to be reinstated, without the imposition of any speed limit.

It was announced that a Public Committee of Enquiry would start work immediately (Sunday 29th. Dec.), investigating the causes of the accident. The enquiry was to be headed by S. Bar-Zeev, deputy to the General Manager of the Transport

Ministry, Y. Mintz, the office's Legal Advisor, Professor Kurt Levi from the Technion and S. Klosky, expert on traffic matters from the Tel Aviv Municipality.

Mr. Savidor stated that the causes were already clear to the railway management but would not elaborate, so as not to prejudice the committee's findings. However, some initial details were released, and were quoted as follows:-

1. It was already clear that the Tel Aviv/Haifa train had left Bet Yehoshua and moved north against a red light and crossed over a turnout before the southbound train had had a chance to cross it and to move to the bypass line at Bet Yehoshua.

2. The signalling system had operated normally.

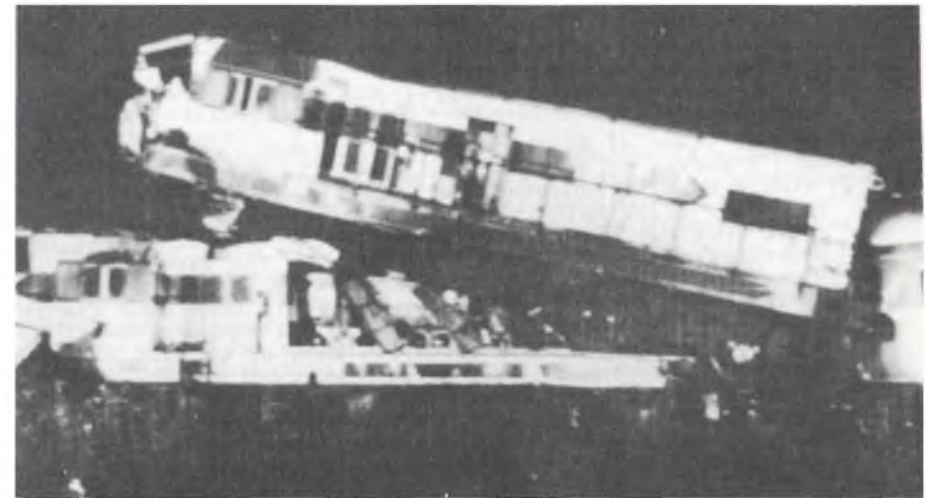
3. Both the locomotives and the railcar sets were checked before the trains' departure, as was normal practice.

4. The train from Tel Aviv would have been travelling between 90-95 kph, and at the time of the crash its speed would have been reduced to about 40 kph. The train from Haifa would have been travelling at about 30 kph.

The Committee subsequently published its findings on 24th. April 1964. Despite extensive efforts, your writer has been unable to locate a copy. However, from various sources it was conclusively reported that the official reason for the collision was that the air brake connections on Train Number 32 between the locomotive and the railcar sets had not been or had been improperly connected, thus preventing the driver from being able to apply the brakes. New measures were to be recommended to improve the standards of safety and to try to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances. The resignation of Menachem Savidor soon after the publication of the report indicated that he personally accepted responsibility for what had happened, and that he felt he had no other alternative. One must, however, put the matter into its proper perspective, as this was a very rare instance and IR should justifiably be proud of its overall safety record. This is a point that is unfortunately overlooked by the general travelling public, especially when one considers the horrendous loss of life on the very heavily-congested and under-invested road network in Israel. Perhaps if it were to be emphasised just how safe rail travel is in comparison to the standards of motor cars, IR patronage might increase...

The writer would like to thank the following, for their kind assistance in the preparation of this article: Paul Cotterell, for valuable guidance and permission to quote from his book; Harel Even for the sketch map and clarification of certain details; Nachum Greenberg for his recollections of the incident and permission to reproduce the photographs, and Igal Bar Yair.

(*: This was the most serious accident between two trains in regular operational service, notwithstanding the tragic level crossing accident between a school bus and a passenger train that occurred at Habonim in 1985, which resulted in heavy loss of life.)



From Mrs. Lea Smith of Tel Aviv I have received a letter concerning her late husband David (known as "Tashy"); David came to Palestine in 1926 at the age of 25 to serve in the British contingent of the Palestine Police, and eventually reached the rank of Inspector. In 1941 he married Lea Rothschild, of Rishon Le-Zion. In 1944 he left the Police and was appointed to the post of Paymaster of the Palestine Railways, based at the head office in Haifa where the couple lived.

For the purpose of the monthly payment of salaries to the employees, David travelled down the line once a month, in a special secured carriage, stopping at each station down to Kantara. (See 20:24 for a photo of this carriage). Lea writes:

"On the 12th. January 1946 David left home for the usual monthly trip. As a rule he would be away for three days, so naturally I was surprised to see him back only a few hours after he left; he was bruised and angry.

Apparently, when the train reached the outskirts of Hadera, about fifty kilometres south of Haifa, the line was blown up by members of the underground 'Irgun Zvai Leumi', and the carriage in which David travelled was derailed. He found himself on the floor of the carriage looking into the barrel of a gun held by a Yemenite girl in shorts. She proceeded to tell David that he would come to no harm, and the Irgun was only interested in confiscating Palestine Railways' money, which would be used to assist in the settlement of Jewish immigrants in Palestine. To the best of my recollection £40,000 sterling were 'confiscated' on this occasion. When in Israel many years later David had the opportunity of meeting the man who had been in charge of the 'confiscation' operation."

The Smiths were among the British personnel who were evacuated to England via Cyprus in 1947/8; they spent fifteen years in Scotland and England, and on David's retirement in 1963 they returned to Israel and settled first in Rishon Le-Zion and later Tel Aviv. David Smith passed away in 1991 at the age of ninety, having kept in touch over the years with former PP and PR colleagues.

Mr. G. Cowan of Newton Heath, Manchester, writes:

"I served in the last war, 1942-45, and travelled in the Middle East. I remember the trains - windows out or broken, very few light bulbs, and the best speed was about 20 mph.

It took two nights and two days sometimes to travel to our destinations, and we would still be in the same country. Sometimes the local Arabs would sneak onto the tops of the trains and at the opportune moment would come down and get into an open window, snatch someone's kitbag, throw it out of the window and jump out after it. Many of us lost kitbags and other possessions by this method. We used to stop at points on the way - they could hardly be called stations, just outposts - where the local Arabs would try to get us to buy and bread and African Star Ribbons; they favourite cry was "Eggs'a'bread and African Stars !" They'd also try to sell us iced water in plastic containers."

From p. 118f. (After the battle of Mughar, near Ramleh):

"The 6th. Mounted Brigade moved no further on the day of Mughar because the 22nd. Mounted Brigade, when commencing an attack on Akir, the old Philistine city of Ekron, were counterattacked on their left. During the night, however, the Turks in Akir probably heard the full story of Mughar [I have spared you many grisly details, Ed.] and did not wait long for a similar action against them. The 22nd., Mounted Brigade drove them out early next morning, and they went rapidly away across the railway at Naaneh, leaving in our hands the railway guard of seventy men.....

Farther eastwards on the 13th., [November 1917] the 75th. Division had also been giving of its best. The objective of this Division was the important Junction Station on the Turks' Jaffa-Jerusalem railway, and a big step forward was made in the early afternoon by the overcoming of a stubborn resistance at Mesmiyeh, troops rushing the village from the south and capturing 292 prisoners and 7 machine guns. The 234th. Brigade began an advance on Junction Station during the night, but were strongly counter-attacked and had to halt till the morning, when at dawn they secured the best positions on the rolling downs west of the station, and by 7.30 the station itself was occupied.

Two engines and 45 vehicles were found intact; two large guns on trucks and over 100 prisoners were also taken. The enemy shelled the station during the morning, trying in vain to damage his lost rolling stock. The booty was of immense value to us, and to a large extent it solved the transport problem which at this moment was a very anxious one indeed. The line was metre gauge [Actually, by now, 1.05m. Ed.] and we had no stock to fit it, though later the Egyptian State Railways brought down some engines and trucks from the Luxor-Assouan section, but this welcome aid was not available till after the rains had begun and had made lorry traffic temporarily impossible between our standard gauge railhead and our fighting front. Junction Station was no sooner occupied than a light-railway staff under Colonel O'Brien was brought up from Beit Hanun.

The whole of the line to Deir Sineid was not in running order, but broken culverts were given minor repairs, attention was bestowed on trucks, and the engines were closely examined while the Turks were shelling the station. The water tanks had been destroyed, as a result of which two men spent hours in filling up the engines by means of a water jug and basin found in the station buildings, and the Turks had the mortification of seeing these engines steam out of the station during the morning to a cutting which was effective cover from their field-gun fire. The light-railway staff were highly delighted at their success, and the trains which they soon had running over their little system were indeed a boon and a blessing to the fighting men and horses.

On this morning of November 14th. the infantry were operating with Desert Mounted Corps' troops on both their wings. The Australian Mounted Division was on the right, fighting vigorous actions with the enemy rearguards secreted in the irregular, rocky foothills of the Shephela which stand as ramparts to the Judean mountains. It was a difficult task to drive the Turks out of these fastnesses, and while they held on to them it was almost impossible to outflank some of the places like Et Tineh, a railway station and camp of some importance on the line to Beersheba.....On the left of the infantry the Yeomanry Mounted Division was moving forward from Akir and Mansura, and after the 22nd. Mounted Brigade had taken Naaneh they detailed a demolition party to blow up one mile of railway, so that, even if the 75th. Division had not taken Junction Station, Jerusalem would have been entirely cut off from railway communications with the Turkish base at Tul Keram, and Haifa and Damascus....."

The Attack on Latrun: (p.121):

"The Berks. Yeomanry had had outposts on the railway south-east of Naaneh since before dawn [on Nov, 14th.]. They had seen the position the previous day, and a dawn sent forward a squadron dismounted to engage the machine guns posted in the walled-in house at the north of the village. From the railway to the Abu Shushe ridge is about three miles of up and down country....."

This section (from pp.130-136) describes in lengthy but vivid detail the problems of road transport in a country where roads were few and poor, and helps explain the obsessive interest in providing or capturing rail communications during this war:

"The heat of the first two weeks of November changed with a most undesirable suddenness, and though the days continued agreeably warm on the plain into December, the nights became chilly and then desperately cold.....The Generals, with one eye on the enemy and the other on the weather, must have been dismayed in the third week of November at the gathering storm clouds which in bursting flooded the plain with rains unusually heavy for this period of the year. The surface is a very light cotton soil several feet deep. When baked by the summer sun it has a cracked hard crust giving a firm footholds for man and horse, and yielding only slightly to the wheels of light cars; even laden lorries made easy tracks over the country. The lorries generally kept off the ill-made unrolled Turkish road which had been constructed for winter use and, except for slight deviations to avoid wadis and gullies cut by Nature to carry off surplus water, the supply columns could move in almost as direct a course as the flying men.

When the heavens opened all this was altered. The first storm turned the top into a slippery, greasy mass. In an hour or two the rain soaked down into the light earth, and any lorry driver pulling out of the line to avoid a skidding vehicle ahead, had the almost certainty of finding his car and load come to a full stop with the wheels held fast axle deep in the soft soil. An hour's hard digging, the fixing of planks beneath the wheels, and a towing cable from another lorry sometimes got the machine on to the pressed-down track again,

but many were the supply vehicles that had to wait for a couple of sunny days to dry a path for them.

My own experience of the first of the winter rains was so like that of others in the force who moved on wheels that I may give some idea of the conditions by recounting it.....I was some forty miles from the spot at which my despatch could be censored and passed over land wire and cable to London, when a vivid lightning flash warned me that the elements were in forbidding mood....

The map showed a path from Akir through Mansura towards Junction Station, from which the so-called Turkish road ran south. In the gathering gloom my driver picked up wheel tracks through an olive orchard and, crossing a nullah, found the marks of a Ford car's wheels on the other side. The rain fell heavily and soon obliterated all signs of a car's progress, and with darkness coming on there was a prospect of a shivering night with a wet skin in the open. An Australian doctor going up to his regiment....told me that he had no doubt we were on the right road, for he had been given a line through Mansura, which must be the farmhouse ahead of us.... The doctor's horse was slipping in the mud, but my car made even worse going. It skidded to right and left, and only by the skill and coolness of my driver was I saved a ducking in a narrow wadi now full of storm water. After much low-gear work we pulled up a slight rise and saw ahead of us one or two little fires. Under the lee of a dilapidated wall some Scottish infantry were brewing tea and making the most of a slight shelter. It was Mansura, and if we bore to the right and kept the track beaten down by lorries across a field we might, by favour of fortune, reach Junction Station during the night.....

I decided to press on. The road could not be worse than the sea of mud in which I was floundering, and it might be better. We turned right-handed and after a struggle came up against three lorry drivers hopelessly marooned. They had turned in. Up a greasy bank we came to a stop and slid back. We tried again and failed. I relieved the car of my weight and made an effort to push it from behind, but my feet held fast in the mud and the car cannoned into me when it skidded downhill.....Three of the lorry men and the engine got us on the move, and before they took mud back with them to the dry interiors of the lorries they hoped, they said, that we would reach G.H.Q., but declared that it was hopeless to try.

Before getting much further a light, waved ahead of us, told of some one held up. I walked on and found General Butler...unable to move an inch. The efforts of two drivers failed to locate the trouble, and everything removable was taken off the General's car and put into ours, and with the heavier load we started off again for Junction Station. This was not difficult to pick up,, for there were many flares burning to enable working parties to repair engines, rolling stock and permanent way. We got on to the road ultimately, carrying more mud on our feet than I imagined human legs could lift.

Leaving a driver and all spare gear at the station, we thrashed our way along a road metalled with a soft, friable limestone which had been cut into by the iron-shod wheels of German lorries until the ruts were fully a foot deep, and the

soft earth foundation was oozing through to the surface. It was desperately hard to steer a course on this treacherous highway, and a number of lorries we passed had gone temporarily out of action in ditches. The Germans and the Turks had blown up most of the culverts, and the road bridges which had been destroyed had only been lightly repaired with planks and trestles, no safety rails being in position. To negotiate these dangerous paths in the dark the driver had to put on all possible speed and make a dash for it, and he usually got to the other side before a skid became serious. Most of the lorry drivers put out no light because they thought no car would be able to move on such a night, and we had several narrow escapes of finishing our career on a half-sunken supply motor vehicle.

Reinforcements for infantry battalions moved up the road as we came down it. They were going to the front to take the place of casualties, for weather and mud are not considered when bayonets are wanted in the line. So the stolid British infantryman splashed and slipped his way towards the enemy, and he would probably have been sleeping that night if there had not been a risk of his drowning in the mud. The Camel Transport Corps fought the elements with a courage which deserved better luck. The camel dislikes many things and is afraid of some. But if he is capable of thinking at all he regards mud as his greatest enemy. He cannot stand up in it, and if he slips he has not an understanding capable of realising that if all his feet do not go the same way he must spread-eagle and split up. This is what often happens, but if by good luck a camel should go down sideways he seems quite content to stay there, and he is so refractory that he prefers to die rather than help himself to his feet again.

It took our car ten hours to run forty miles, and as the last ten miles was over wet sand and on rabbit wire stretched out across the sand where the car could do fifteen miles an hour, we had averaged something under three miles an hour through the mud....."

(From pp. 186f):....."The (53rd.) Division....had had a comparatively light time watching the Hebron road.....While they were waiting at Dilbeih they did much to improve the main road. The famous zig-zag on the steep ridge between Dharahiyeh and Dilbeih was in good condition, and you saw German thoroughness in the gradients, in the well-banked bends, and in the masonry walls which held up the road where it had been cut in the side of a hill. It was the most difficult part of the road, and the Germans had taken as much care of it as they would of a road in the Fatherland - because it was the way by which they hoped to get to the Suez Canal. Other portions of the road required renewing, and the labour of the Welshmen devoted to the work helped the feeding of the Division not only during the march to Jerusalem but for several weeks after it had passed through it to the hills on the east and north-east. The rations and stores for this Division were carried by the main railway through Shellal to Karm, were thence transferred by limber to a point on the Turks' line to Beersheba, which had been repaired but was without engines, were next hauled in trucks by mules on the railway track, and finally placed in lorries at Beersheba for carriage up the

Hebron road. At this time the capacity of the Latron - Jerusalem road was taxed to the utmost, and every bit of the Welshmen's spadework was repaid a hundredfold.

From Ch. XII: "General Cox's Brigade seized Ramleh on the morning of the 15th., taking 90 prisoners, and then advanced and captured Ludd....In Ludd 360 prisoners were taken, and the brigade carried out a good deal of demolition work on the railway running north."

From p.230: "Making Jerusalem Secure":

"The supply difficulty compelled the holding of the line [against the Turks, near Bireh] with as few troops as possible.....The standard-gauge railway was still a long way from Ramleh, and the railway construction parties had to fight against bad weather and washouts. The Turkish line from Ramleh to Jerusalem was in bad order; a number of bridges were down, so that it was not likely the railway could be working for several weeks. Lorries could supply the troops in the neighbourhood of the Nablus road, though the highway was getting into bad condition, but in the right centre of the line the difficulties of terrain were appalling."

From pp.262f. (A chapter on the Air campaign):

"In Palestine, possibly to a greater extent than in any other theatre of war, our map-makers had to rely on aerial photographs to supply them with the details required for military maps. The best maps we had of Palestine were those prepared by Lieutenant H. H. Kitchener, RE., and Lieutenant Conder in 1881 for the Palestine Exploration Fund. They were still remarkably accurate so far as they went, but 'roads', to give the tracks a description to which they were not entitled, had altered, and villages had disappeared.....

The R.F.C. made long flights in this theatre of war, and some of them were exceptionally difficult and dangerous..... The Turks on their lines of communication with the Hedjaz have an unpleasant recollection of being bombed at Maan. That was a noteworthy expedition. Three machines set out from an aerodrome over 150 miles away in a straight line, the pilots having to steer a course above country with no prominent landmarks. They went over a waterless desert so rough that it would have been impossible to come down without seriously damaging a plane, and if a pilot had been forced to land his chance of getting back to our country would have been almost nil. Water bottles and rations were carried in the machines, but they were not needed, for the three pilots came home together after hitting the station buildings at Maan and destroying considerable material and supplies."

This magazine is a partwork, published by Eaglemoss Publications Ltd., 7, Cromwell Road, London SW7 2HR. Part 98 (bearing no date but published in November 1993) includes a five-page article on the railways of various Middle-Eastern countries, (Jordan, Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq) with maps and illustrations - of a GE diesel at Amman, a G12 at Jerusalem, a Borsig 2-8-0 near Dera'a, an Iranian French-built Turbotrain and a double-headed phosphate train en route to Aqaba. Recommended for a brief overview of the current (or, in Iraq's case, near-current) scene.

Individual back-numbers may be purchased at £1.50 (p&p free within UK) from: Woodgate (Eaglemoss) Ltd., P.O.Box 1, Hastings, TN35 4TJ. Mark envelopes "World of Trains Back Numbers". Recommended.

A SINAI MINERAL RAILWAY.

It's amazing where you find things. I was looking through "Modern Locomotives" by Brian Reed, published in 1949 by the Temple Press Ltd. of London EC1, in the "Boys' Power and Speed Library". In Ch. VII, "Diesel Locomotives", p.61 one finds:

"In the Sinai Peninsula there are some big manganese mines with a long railway to take the ore down to the coast. There is no water there at all, and when steam locomotives were used every drop of water for their boilers had to be brought by ship from Egypt. By turning over to diesel locomotives, the manganese company has saved itself more than £1,000 a year."

Now - who knows any more? Paul Cotterell lists two lines on p.123 of 'Railways of Palestine and Israel' - the Sinai Mining Co. operating both, one of 2' gauge and one of 2'6" - each had at least one Kerr Stuart 0-4-0ST, and acquired Hunslet diesels around 1995 - i.e. after the book was published.

is a small but fascinating book (76 pages) dealing with the Palestinian Jewish Units in the Allied forces in the Middle East, 1941-43. For political reasons these were non-fighting units - the author (a Senior Military Chaplain) mentions Port Operating Companies, Pioneer Companies, R.A.S.C. Motor-Transport Coys, Signals, girls in the A.T.S., as well as groups in the RAF and others, totalling some 25,000 troops (including 51st. M.E. Commando, which fought in Abyssinia). The book was published in 1944 by Victor Gollancz.

On p.34 is the sole reference to railways:

"Evacuated from the besieged fortress [of Tobruk] in August 1941, 5.M.T. Coy. were sent to Qena in Upper Egypt, the fifth hottest town in the world, and for over a year, in the broiling heat, they toiled between this spot and Safaga on the Red Sea in connection with the building of the road and railway line which was [sic] to afford alternative supply routes should the Suez Canal become untenable."

"SCRAGGY" By Wyn ('Doc') Fear.

Being a further memoir of life on the Western Desert and HBT Lines.

Quite a number of the 193 Railway Operating Company of the Royal Engineers had been trained on the Longmoor Military Railway; the others had been trained a No. 2 Railway Training Centre at Melbourne on the LMS railway which ran from Chellaston East Junction via Melbourne to New Lount Colliery and on to Ashby-de-la-Zouch For over a year in 1940 the Company was spread out in detachments, at Inverness, Stirling and Perth in Scotland, Leeds and Weston near Derby. Early in 1941 the Company was called together for embarkation for duty overseas.

We were ordered to report to "Apple Pie Camp" at Longmoor, and as I jumped down off the motor truck a strange man said to me "Welcome to the Arctic". There was snow on the floor and it was bitterly cold. Our detachment had left Inverness the day before and the weather had been quite mild.

This was my first meeting with Scraggy. About the same size as myself - 5' 11", but he had a bullet-shaped head and sparse straw-coloured hair, very straight and hanging all ways. From the smile in his eyes you could see he was happy, but only until someone upset him. I rarely saw him after that meeting, and didn't even hear of him until we both stood guard together about a week after our first meeting. That night I learned he came from Birmingham; not married, didn't smoke, but liked women and beer, in that order. After our Embarkation Leave he was late arriving back at Camp, and he walked into the Barrack Room covered in dust and holding a long handle of about three feet length, the type of handle we saw on modern doors. He was cursing the Germans, Hitler and everything he stood for. When I asked "What's up?", his reply was, "You know that pub (I believe in Selly Oak, Birmingham), well, it's not there now. I was just going in to get a pint when that dirty German Bastard dropped a bomb as I was going to open the door; He blew the pub out of my hand!". He held up the door handle and said, "Terrible, that's all that's left of my beautiful pub."

His big problem was - he didn't like discipline. If an N.C.O. ordered him to do something, he would argue. This caused him quite a deal of trouble and of course he hated Officers and anything like the word 'Discipline'.

Eventually we set off by train to Aintree, Liverpool, for our troop-ship. All very secret, but every station we passed, everyone knew it - even though the Government had ordered all station names to be taken down. The loading onto the ship was attended to by our Officers, who made a complete mess of it. The whole Company were supposed to take the forward hold, but can you understand how only half the Company were put there and the rest filled up with RAF personnel? Yes, they could not supervise such a simple thing as directing men to their correct tables. Scraggy and I decided that officers were such a hindrance - we had to look after ourselves yet an officer took 1.3 men to look after him. Each had his Batman (servant), then they always had their cook and also usually two men as waiters in their dining room.

After six long weeks on the troop ship we arrived in Durban, South Africa. We had had lectures on the Colour Bar. How they lived was nothing to do with us. What a beautiful place! The people of English descent opened their houses and their hearts to give us a good time; those of Dutch descent (the Boers) didn't want to know us, because secretly many were pro-Nazi.

The second night out in Durban Scraggy lost his mates in a Pub in West Street. Now Scraggy was on his own and as he walked up West Street from near the docks he noticed an argument going on between a Rickshaw Boy and his passenger. These Rickshaw boys were good; they would pull two adults with ease and once they 'got up speed' they balanced on the shafts and every stride would be ten to fifteen feet long. Also they wore fabulous head-dresses - huge carved ornamental creations in really flamboyant colours. Scraggy had been warned to keep out of trouble but he went in, fist flying, because the passenger had kicked the rickshaw boy. The passenger fled because of such a ferocious attack by a soldier. Scraggy now comforted the negro and eventually he put the negro in the Rickshaw, put on the man's headgear, and I saw Scraggy coming up West Street, balancing on the shafts just like the rickshaw boys. However, when he arrived in camp he was put under Close Arrest for creating a disturbance. Next day he was put in a 'Place of Correction', a tin shed where he slept. Adjoining it was an open-air pen for exercise. He went sun-bathing in the pen with nothing on. It was February - their mid-summer - and Scraggy was covered in huge blisters, each about the size of half an egg, which caused him terrible pain. The last I heard of him at that time was that he was in hospital.

After a stint in the Western Desert, supposedly to get us used to the sand (and each man suffered from diarrhoea, known as "wog guts"), we eventually arrived in El Daba and started 'Learning the Road'. That is, double-banking the Arabs. [i.e. double-manning the locos. Ed.]. After 'double-banking' one night I arrived back in El Daba at 8 am. just as the passenger train from Alexandria was pulling in, and who should get off it but Scraggy. He had obtained a 'Pass' and spent the previous day in Cairo. After I had had breakfast and a wash I went to find out Scraggy's news. He was in a tent showing off an Egyptian-design handbag which he had bought for his mother. To me it was the usual leather goods I had seen before but when someone asked "How much did you pay for it?" he answered "Seven pounds". I thought it was worth £3. Worse still, someone said, "Have you seen this?" - and there was, previously unnoticed, a label with the words "Made in Birmingham"! No-one said a word, but Scraggy seemed to explode. He cursed every Arab in the world and he declared war on all Arabs. I took it to be mere talk, but the results were not very good...

Scraggy now, as an R.E.D. (Railway Engine Driver) (Steam) had to learn the road, and I expected some repercussions from being with an Arab train crew. Nothing happened, he signed for the road, and that was that, we thought.

During this period there was a lot of enemy action, sometimes very close, and we were compelled to carry our rifles at all times. On Scraggy's first trip up the Desert on his own, he hooked on at El Daba, with a Black Eight 2-8-0 on

an Ambulance Train. All coaches and the loco on vacuum brakes. All locos had to pull an 18,000 gallon tank of water because there was no water beyond El Daba except at little at Fuka. Scraggy stopped at Fuka; the Fireman stood on the top of the tender topping up with water, and Scraggy stood by the valve which he had opened to allow water to run into the tender. He looked back at the train and saw someone with their head through the window of the train. He jumped up on the footplate, grabbed his rifle, loaded it and shouted to get away; it was an Arab who was stealing a table cloth. Scraggy took aim, the Arab turned and went to run away, and Scraggy fired and killed him. Wow - you might think he had killed a thief, but this was an Ambulance Train, protected by the Geneva Convention, supposedly unarmed - yet the train driver had used a gun and killed a man with a loaded weapon. This actually could have blown into an international incident.

One week later, Scraggy was booked on an Engineering train. That is, he was under the instructions of the Engineer on the train, and would have to stop as required In Section. There were about 20 Arabs on the wagons, and they had to shovel the ballast off as decided. One of these workers had a long scarf wrapped around his neck; the weather was cold because it was February. After stopping and shovelling the ballast off several times and thus getting warmer, this Arab loosened his scarf. The next time the train had to move this Arab was looking over the side to see when they would stop, but the scarf became entangled around the wheel of the truck he was riding on and pulled him off the wagon, and the wheel of the wagon cut his body in two. I was walking along the Platform at El Daba when the Station Master came out saying, "Wyn, just had a call from Scraggy, saying there's a wog coming down on the next train in two parts". When the goods train arrived, yes, we saw what he meant; there was an Arab's body which had been cut in two, each part in a separate box.

A short time later, Scraggy was booked to go East, i.e. towards Alexandria. He set off with a heavy goods train but somewhere near Amriya on a level crossing he hit a light truck in which were two Arabs. They were both killed, and I believe his loco was derailed. If I remember correctly the pieces of truck had to be cut away before they could work on rerailing the loco.

Yes, it does rain in the Western Desert, and Scraggy was booked out to Mersa Matruh once when it was pouring with rain. He set off and was pretty cranky (complaining) about having to go out on such a night. He pulled out of El Daba at about 7pm. and at 9.30 I was called to drive the Breakdown Train. It appeared that the rain had caused a subsidence on the line, and his loco was off the track. Now, as I heard afterwards, the loco had ploughed into the ballast and there was a dead camel under the tender of the loco. My job was to come in behind this train, pull the wagons back to his previous station, then push the crane in to clear the wreck. Was the camel unattended, or had there been a driver? The track was pulled up and relaid, so no-one knows for sure. Still, it gave us three days' rest.

Scraggy and his fireman were sent down to Latikiya on the Egyptian-Sudan border, where a narrow-gauge railway had been built from Qena to Safaga on the Red Sea. There was a

Phosphate mine in Safaga. Scraggy was shunting in this area when some natives were killed because no-one knew they were there. Anyway, I know Scraggy came back to the Company and had lost his ticket as a Driver. He was a Fireman for at least one year.

Eventually Scraggy regained his Driver's Ticket but was just as unlucky - if this is the word. The whole Company were together again after being split into detachments. Now I heard how Scraggy had held up the whole of the E.S.R. in Suez. Both he and his fireman were rostered for one week on night shift, shunting in Ataka and Suez. The loco was a Yankee Baldwin oil-burning 0-6-0T. It was a very cold night in February. About 2 am. the shunter told him "O.K., that's all until so-and-so train at 6.30am." Both Scraggy and his fireman lay down on the footplate and went to sleep. At 6.45am. the shunter, with whistle blowing furiously, came screaming up to the loco and found them both asleep. Scraggy jumped to get the fire going but the oil was cold in the pipe between the tank and the burner and would not run. The steam gauge read Zero and the crude oil will set hard after once being heated, so now Scraggy had to strip down all the pipe work between the fuel tank and the burner. Even though you can do this you still have to get the old oil out of the pipe which is really hard. He eventually took the pipework apart but forgot to close the valve on the tank, but due to it being cold no oil ran out. They managed to light a small fire and with the aid of oily rags melted the oil in the pipes by 10am. The next job was to reassemble the pipes. The daytime temperature had increased and then they realised they had not closed the Tank valve when oil started oozing onto the floor. Panic stations now! Shunter screaming, signalman wanting to know "Why?", Cairo Control wants to know "How Long?", a Captain from 169 Railway Workshops came over to find out "What had gone wrong", and Scraggy in the mood to tell them what they should do! By this time it was quite hot in Suez but Scraggy took a chance and got his fire going. No steam for blower and a pool of oil over the footplate and underneath. According to Scraggy's report he got going at 12.20pm.

We now took over the running of the Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli from Beirut. The Company consisted of 45 Drivers. Seven of them were employed on Camp duties leaving 38, out of which three drivers were needed for the loco shed, the Yard shunt took three more drivers, Tripoli shunt three drivers, Azzib four drivers - thirteen drivers on shunting duties leaving 25 Drivers. Quite often I would be called upon to take a train to Suez and bring one back. I would be away for at least a week. That left 24 drivers (plenty of Firemen), but considering that we were often operating 20 trains per day it left little time to spare.

About this time a Driver, Sgt. Hall, hit something in the Section before Sidon and derailed his loco. Now Scraggy, with due instructions as to where the obstruction was, was sent into the Section from the Beirut end to pull the passenger train back to the station so as to let the crane get to the loco. Well, like so many plans....Scraggy and his Fireman got into the section Light Engine but about a mile from the obstruction they started fighting on the footplate; consequently they ran into the rear of the train, hitting four

more coaches off the rails! It sounds incredible, but it's true....

Now Scraggy had quite a run of bad luck. He was booked to take a train from Beirut to Haifa - a loose-coupled goods train. The marshalling of the train was all wrong, because behind the Guard's Van they put a full-size railway coach. At Khalde he had to pick up an 80-ton crane, which he did by backing the whole train onto it. Now, because the only brake on the train was on the loco you should be able to guess what would happen. The Railway coach mentioned had a Colonel and his Batman inside. It was furnished with three saloons - the Officer's Bedroom, Living Room & Kitchen, and Batman's Bedroom. In the middle room was a coal-burning cooking range with a chimney pipe through the roof. Now, as I was told it, as the train pulled out it snatched the last coupling, that on the crane, which caused the cooker to jump. When Scraggy was nearing the next station he applied the brake on the loco and all the buffers came together - and then the crane hit the coach, the chimney on the cooker went one way and the cooker went the other, and hit the Batman and broke two of his ribs. The Colonel lay on his bed hoping for the best.

As Scraggy left the next station, again this was repeated: Snatch! and the whole sequence started again. I believe it was at Sidon that the Colonel and his Batman evacuated the coach and went on to their destination by car. Some days later I saw the Colonel's coach at Azzib and, having a coach key, I went in. The chimney was gone, the cooker must have done the whole trip backwards and forwards along that room because the front and back walls were damaged, and had that journey been much longer the cooker would have been sliding through both bedrooms and the living room!

There were several other incidents and episodes - I can't remember all details, but it was well known that Scraggy had been involved with the deaths of 21 Arabs and was secretly very proud of it.

Then a terrible thing happened. A nice young chap, a Driver by the name of Lane, was returning to Beirut from Tripoli with a mixed train, coaches next to the diesel engine and goods trucks behind. He was the youngest Driver in the Company and he was good at his job. He told us some while later that when he went over the level crossing at Nahr Ibrahim a bus loaded with passengers (seated and standing) raced across the road in front of him and at every level crossing afterwards the bus tried to beat the train. (From Nahr Ibrahim to Beirut there were eleven level crossings). Each time the bus would just make it or he would have to brake violently to stop. At the last level crossing, which is the main road from Jounie to Beirut, the bus was halfway across as the Whitcomb diesel hit it in the middle. The bus was pushed 200 yards along the line with bodies falling out of it. I only saw the diesel come onto the loco sheds where the front was hosed over to get rid of the mess on it.

After all the trouble and questions the Driver and his Mate went up to the camp. When I got there Lane was sitting on his bed with his head in his hands. I said, "Are you all right, do you want to talk about it?", etc. His answer was No. Almost immediately Scraggy came in (this was not his barrack room), and said, "You miserable rotten bastard, it has taken me four

years to get my score of twenty-one and now you go out and beat me with one hit; twenty-two and six injured, it beats me and now we are due to go home !"

Two years later I was in Birmingham and near the main LMS Loco sheds, so I thought I would look up Scraggy. If I hurried, I was told, he would be coming into Snow Hill in half an hour. I went to Snow Hill, and sure enough he came in, fireman on a push-and-pull tank loco. Just a brief talk then, but we arranged to meet that night. He took me home. Now this was Scraggy, it wasn't really what he told you, but how it could have happened. "Met a beautiful Indian girl just after I was demobbed. Went out with her several times, found her very nice, but one night as I came home with her a man jumped out of a doorway with a knife. Now wasn't he silly ! (I could agree, because Scraggy had always been my opponent at Unarmed Combat). "What happened ?" "Oh, I made him drop the knife, and then I broke his neck. I spent a week in the cells but got away with it. Not very nice - it was her husband who I'd killed !"

23:17



Rail-mounted cranes at the Nesher Cement Works near Haifa; photo taken from "Palestine on the Eve", by Ladislav Farago, published by Putnam, London, September 1936.

23:18 MORE H.B.T. MEMORIES. By Ray Anstey.

Ray, now of Cheltenham, served in 954 Railway Operating Coy., R.E., operating the Tripoli - Haifa route, and writes:

"Regarding this unit, during its stay at Beirut it was a small unit of about 100 men, the O.C. being a Major. We were billeted in two camps, one alongside the marshalling yard with Officers' Quarters, Offices and M.T. (Motor Transport) Section, and the top camp reached through olive groves containing Mess Huts, and about six huts for the men.

I was made the C.O.'s Driver in the M.T. Section, as I had driven on the Railway prior to joining, but my Trade was Brakesman/Shunter.

At various places along the line were Blockposts which were usually a two-room hut manned by an N.C.O. (Blockman) and one civilian Boy (Cook). These were paid and replenished with stores weekly by a Captain Hall and myself by road, but at one time we converted a Jeep with rail wheels to do the job, but unfortunately the jarring at the rail joints used to shear off the wheel bolts.

During my time I recall a large loco depot at Azzib near the Palestine border; the engines were fired on a thick grade of oil we used to call Mazout, and the tenders were extra large for this supply.

I used to drive the C.O. to Cairo at Weekends to visit G.H.Q. Middle East for orders, but I think mostly for courting, as he married a nurse from there. It was a long drive, especially across the Sinai at night; I remember one trip where my shorts stayed on the leather seat of the Humber Staff Car when I got out ! (Happy Days....)

One of the jobs we had was transporting cattle truck loads of refugees from Aleppo to Haifa. I remember offering them my bacon sandwiches but they would not take them - I was young and perhaps foolish. Intoxicating liquor was very cheap, so events are a bit hazy !"

23:19 THE YAD VASHEM MEMORIAL WAGON.

Earlier references to the Memorial Wagon in 12:20 and 13:12 came to mind recently on seeing a newspaper cutting relating to the donation of a Polish boxvan to an American Holocaust Museum in Baltimore in 1989, (Jewish Telegraph 14/7/89) and seeing a documentary of the Drancy concentration camp site near Paris where a four-wheel van is also preserved on a short length of track.

It continues to amaze and disappoint that the van body only is preserved at Yad Vashem; one of the unique features of the Holocaust over other manifestations of human nastiness was the Industrialised nature of the murders, the manner in which people were transported across Europe to meet their fates - a process made possible by the rails and wheels of the railway system. And yet - it is the rails and wheels which are missing from this memorial symbol. Can anything be done to rectify this ?

The Editor.

Uri has sent a chapter from the autobiography of a certain Josef Yekutieli who served in the Ottoman Army in World War 1. The title is "MiGoloh LeGeulah" ("From Exile to Redemption"), and thanks are due to the Tel Aviv Museum for permission to translate and publish this excerpt.

"One day the unit I served, the "Mujaheddin", received an order to despatch at once 1000 gourds made of goatskins, to be filled with water for the troops stationed near the Suez Canal. We confiscated enough of these in Nablus and the surrounding villages, and stored them until they could be transported at our warehouse at Massoudieh, a railway station near Nablus. Our commanding officer, Salach-a-din, gave orders to his Second-in-Command, Beha-al-din, to go at once to Massoudieh to advise the Station Master to load them onto railway wagons and wait the arrival of the officer who would be in charge of despatching them for Beer Sheba and safeguarding them on the way against theft and damage. After two days Beha-al-din returned sick, reporting that the gourds were loaded onto two wagons, but he needed two more wagons; they would arrive in two days.

While Beha-al-din was absent, Salach-a-Din Bey promised me a ten-day Leave so that I could spend Sukkot with my mother. According to my calendar, by Sukkot the gourds would be well on their way to the Front. All seemed well. But at this moment Salach-a-din Bey called for me, changing the entire situation. He told me, "Yes, I promised you a Leave, but first go to Massoudieh, check the gourds, look for the whereabouts of the two missing wagons which have not yet made an appearance, and load onto them the rest of the gourds. Finished? Now accompany the transport to Beer Sheba. Upon safe arrival ask from the proper Officer a receipt that all is well. Go from there to the railway station at Wadi Surar and give the receipt to the commanding officer. From this moment your Leave of ten days will start."

I took my written orders and food coupons, mounted my horse and rode to Massoudieh.

The first thing at Massoudieh was that I discovered that the two promised wagons had not yet arrived, and further, that nobody knew anything about them. To my great good fortune I met at the station Benjamin Fischman, whom I knew very well as he had studied with my brother at the Hebrew Teachers College at Jerusalem. He served at the station as a "Vesikas", that is to say he was responsible for the supply of firewood for the locomotives. (There was no longer any supply of coal).

He was happy to help and through his connections was able to hasten their appearance, from the Masshab railway station (Tulkarm). They were loaded, connected to the two others and incorporated into a train to Wadi Surar. At the very last moment we discovered a problem: the four wagons with gourds with open ones. The Turkish locos at this time were fired with wood only, which resulted in a lot of sparks and burning particles of wood flying about. The perfect combination to damage and even set fire to the dry hides. What could we do? Closed wagons were reserved exclusively for the transport of soldiers and ammunition. As I had no other way out I went to

the commanding officer of the station and asked for an official document, duly signed and stamped by him, that I had asked for closed wagons and he had refused, stating that closed wagons were reserved for "Jilderim" (a secret code-word for the troops designated to conquer the Suez Canal). As there was no other option he ordered that the open wagons be covered with tarpaulins to protect them. I argued with him for a long time, for if I had no such document and it was discovered that they had been damaged in transit, I as the man responsible could face a Court Martial. What a Court Martial in the Turkish Army means, everyone knows.... In the end I got my Lifesaver....

Around midnight the train left Massoudieh station. Until we arrived at Tulkarm station I sat on one of "my" wagons, being under a constant, heavy rain of cinders from the woodburning loco. Having no other choice I crawled under under the tarpaulin, having the options of either suffocating or roasting. After a ride of about an hour we arrived at Tulkarm station. Immediately I started to look for a place to lay down in an open wagon. I found one, and lay down snugly in a corner, when a hail of bullets hit the train for about 20 minutes. One of the loco driver's helpers was wounded and transferred to a hospital. The Gendarmerie at Tulkarm opened an investigation into who had opened fire, but with no result. In their report they stated that unknown deserters were responsible. I checked the gourds and found that in one of the wagons some had been hit by bullets. Immediately I went to the commander of the station asking for a written, signed and stamped document stating that the gourds had been damaged due to attack by unknown persons. At first the officer declined to give any document but as the commander of the Gendarmerie took my side the station commander had no choice and I received my document, duly signed and stamped. We had been scheduled for a 15-minute stop, but were actually delayed here for five hours.

Around noon we left for Ludd; however in Ras-el-Ain (today's Rosh HaAyin) our loco ran out of wood fuel, and we stayed there the whole night; in the morning hours, as a wood supply arrived, we went on our way, arriving at Ludd at noon. From Massoudieh to Ludd it had taken our train two nights and a day !

At Ludd we again stayed for a while because our loco had broken down. After repair we left for Wadi Surar, arriving in the evening. This station is an important railway centre as four lines cross. To Afula, to Jerusalem, to Gaza and to Beer-Sheba. Here locos are changed, wagons shunted and trains come and go from all four directions. I didn't let my four wagons out of my sight - even better, I mounted one all the time until they had been placed on a siding, which took up well over an hour. After checking that the tarpaulins were tight, I went to the station offices to check how I should continue the journey to Beer-Sheba. After being shuffled from clerk to clerk and officer to officer I finally learned that the train to Beer-Sheba was to be made up in two days' time.

Being rather tired I went to a restaurant for a cup of coffee and after talking to some civilians learned that in the station there was no hotel or accommodation for a more-or-less good night's sleep. Military personnel, civilians and passers-by usually spent the night in an empty wagon, sleeping on the

floor. I decided to sleep (or, should I say, to spend the night) on one of my wagons, on the gourds and under the tarpaulins. I paid for the coffee and went on my way. Nearing my wagons, a young Austrian officer came towards me and asked if I understood German, and if so, please could I translate for him what the Turkish Station Master wanted from him. Walking with him towards the station building I learned that he was stuck with a wagon of supplies for his artillery unit near Beer-Sheba and nobody in the station understood German. I translated for him in his dilemma to the Station Master, stressing the point that it was of the utmost urgency that this wagon should have the highest priority. The Turkish officer replied that that evening he was helpless, but that we should return in the morning. The Austrian officer, a Fahrnich (not a senior rank) by name of Kunze, invited me for a coffee in his wagon. We climbed aboard. A carbide lamp glowed in a pale light, the wagon itself was full of crates. In one corner, over a blanket, two Austrian soldiers played cards. Fahrnich Kunze asked one of them to make coffee. The other one put up a small table, spread out a waxed cloth and arranged on the table bread, cheese and a can of sardines. Four crates made improvised chairs and we had our dinner. After dinner we talked and drank a little wine and while talking I told Fahrnich Kunze where I was prepared to spend the night, with no blankets, like a typical Turkish soldier. Immediately I got an invitation to spend the night with them, sleeping on a sheepskin and covered with a net blanket. Thankfully I accepted.

Next morning, after a good night's sleep, we went back to the Turkish station master, but he was not in his office. Well, we sat down outside waiting for him. After a while an effendi came along, elegantly dressed, and the soldier on duty respectfully made him coffee. Drinking the excellent coffee he opened a conversation with me and the Austrian officer, explaining that he supplied the Turkish Army with all sorts of goods and had great contracts. He was from Ramle, and his name was Alkhiry. When he learned that I was escorting a shipment of gourds to Beer-Sheba he declared that he also had a shipment of three wagonloads of gourds which he had to deliver to the military supply depot in Beer-Sheba. Now we should call him by his private name - Amin. He ordered coffee for us and declared his willingness to help us to transport our wagons to their destination. He was prepared to attach our wagons to his, which were due to leave that afternoon. In the meantime the Station Master arrived and again Amin, our new friend, invited us for coffee - and for lunch.

After lunch Fahrnich Kunze left us, walking back to his wagon. Amin asked me to show him the four wagons with the gourds. He lifted the tarpaulin at one corner, feeling the gourds with his finger-tips and stating that his partner, Djarallah, would be delighted to talk with me in regard to the gourds. At noon I met with Fahrnich Kunze in the Station Master's office. He received us with a big smile, and we sat down at his table. We smoked one of the best Turkish cigarettes he offered us, but before we finished the first cigarette who should come along, inviting us for a big lunch, than our friend Amin, driving a horse-drawn carriage. Quickly we all climbed aboard, driving to the village of A-Tinah.

After enjoying the excellent food the Austrian officer asked me to express in his and our name our gratitude.

When we returned to the Station Master's office at almost 2 o'clock in the afternoon we were informed that the train to Beer-Sheba would leave Wadi Surar the next day, in the morning hours.

In the evening I went to my wagons, found everything in order and climbed onto one of them. I lay down and fell asleep. Alas, my sleep didn't last long. My new friend Amin woke me up. Getting down I saw that he had brought along another effendi, very fat, elegantly dressed and with a tarbush on his head. Well, this was Djarallah Effendi, Amin's partner. Both of them wanted to examine my gourds, which they found excellent. The two partners explained to me that they had to deliver to the army at Beer-Sheba 4,000 gourds destined for the soldiers in the Sinai and the ones stationed near the Suez Canal. Until now they had only accumulated 3,500, and they offered to buy from me 500 gourds for the price of 1,000 Turkish Pounds. I told them the gourds were government property and that I had to deliver all of them in the best possible condition, and that I had no intention of disobeying my orders or engaging in any foul intrigue because of greed. Both "gentlemen" started whole-heartedly to laugh and told me that my attitude was proof that I was still very "green". Ali Djarallah Effendi assured me that he would produce a document, properly signed and stamped by the commanding officer of the railway station and the Station Master himself that 500 gourds of my shipment had been partly burned by flying cinders. To this my only reply was that the gourds were not mine and not for sale.

At 6 o'clock in the evening I met with Fahrnich Kunze and together we went to the Station Master to enquire when our wagons would be coupled to the train leaving on the following morning for Beer-Sheba. After being assured that this would be done in the very first morning hours I returned to my wagons and resolved not to leave them unguarded for the night. After a good evening meal which I enjoyed with Fahrnich Kunze and his men in his wagon I went to the wagons, checked the tarpaulins for tightness, loaded my revolver and lay down to sleep on one of the wagons. Yes, I wanted to sleep very badly as I was very tired but couldn't shut my eyes. All sorts of thoughts resulting from the day's happenings went through my head. When morning came I climbed from my guard's post, wetted my face with water which was supposed to be for washing and went to the Austrians' wagon for breakfast. At 7 o'clock the loco arrived and shunted the Austrians' wagon to the train to Beer-Sheba but not mine. I asked the loco driver why he didn't couple up my wagons also and he replied that he had received no such instructions. I ran to the Station Master and insisted that my four wagons be shunted at once to the outgoing train, because they were loaded with gourds destined for the troops in Sinai, near the Suez Canal and were to be transported "Most Urgent". The Station Master, together with the officer in charge of traffic who had in the meantime arrived, shuffled through their papers and came up with the answer that the train for Beer-Sheba which left on this day already had 10 wagons and in the station was only one loco, and therefore they could not move my wagons as well. On the

A TURKISH WW1 LIGHT RAILWAY REDISCOVERED. By Paul Cotterell.

next day however a train should arrive from Afula consisting of two locomotives and then it would be possible to connect my four wagons to them. I had no choice but to agree, insisting that an armed guard should be posted all night near to them, as I was suspicious that all or part of them might be stolen. To this they answered that all arrangements regarding guards were not their duty, so they sent me to the commanding officer of the station. This officer, with the rank of Bin-Bashi (Major), wanted to know the reason for my suspicions. I told him that unknown persons had contacted me, offering a bribe of 1000 Turkish Pounds for buying from my shipment 500 gourds, but that naturally I had declined, and again insisted on my suspicions that they should try to steal them at night. I also explained to him that in the event he would not put guards on the shipment, then he should give orders to the Traffic Officer that the wagons be coupled to the morning train to Beer-Sheba. If he refused to do any of this, then I should demand from him a written statement to that effect which I could show to my commanding officer, Salach-a-Din Bey, who was a personal friend of Djemal Pasha, the Commanding Officer of all Turkish troops in Palestine. I made a further point clear: my friend the Austrian officer who goes by train this morning to Beer-Sheba would immediately upon arrival there report to the German General that the commanding officer of the railway station at Wadi Surar had held up a shipment of 1000 gourds urgently needed for the troops in the Sinai desert and would be responsible for the consequences.

My arguments hit the bull's eye. Straightaway we both went to the Traffic Officer and after a short conversation he gave the order that my four wagons should at once be attached to the train leaving for Beer-Sheba.

At 10 o'clock in the morning the train left Wadi Surar for Beer-Sheba with my four wagons. As my wagons were directly behind the Austrians' one I went to them. Fahrlich Kunze and his men were happy to see me again and we had a pleasant time together. Very slowly the train wound on its way. We sang songs, told stories, ate and the time passed on uneventfully, till we arrived NEXT MORNING (!) at our destination.

The unloading at Beer-Sheba took three days and, after being duly checked, I received an official receipt, duly signed and stamped, stating that I had delivered 1000 gourds according to the delivery order. As with this act my ordeal ended, I spent another day with my friend Kunze as a guest at his artillery unit. Well, on my fifth day in Beer-Sheba I started my delayed Leave, and went on my leave, to Jaffa to my mother but - the very first act was to return to Wadi Surar railway station to hand over the document that all was well and that the gourds had arrived in Beer-Sheba as by order. The commanding officer received me very sweetly and in no time I was on my way to Jaffa, and to my 10 Day Leave.

The late Dr. Walter (Pinchas) Pick of Jerusalem once wrote a doctoral thesis entitled "Development of Railways in Palestine from 1838", for Dropsia University in the USA. It is a truly monumental piece of work, running to more than 650 pages, and he obviously laboured mightily for many years over its compilation. A copy has been sitting on my shelves for some time, but I have not referred to it before. I think this is because you really do need to be in the right frame of mind to tackle the thesis - it is such a daunting prospect! Recently I began to delve into its pages and quickly came across plenty of information which was previously unknown to me.

The thesis has its blind spots - hardly anything on locos and rolling stock, for example; and several obvious mistakes were noted in this field. The post-1918 history is only covered in outline. Nevertheless, Dr. Pick's strengths are evident in those areas on which he concentrated: early railway-building schemes (and schemings), the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway, construction of the Hedjaz Railway, and military railways of World War 1. On these subjects he assembled an impressive body of evidence using mainly published sources, including several (mostly from Germany) which I had not known about. I hope to highlight aspects of Pick's work in subsequent issues of 'Harakevet'; in deference to his weighty efforts I will in future refer to his work as The Pick Thesis.

Dr Pick appears to have uncovered one Turkish line which had completely escaped my notice. This was a branch from Tel Sheria to Shellal. Pick wrote of it:

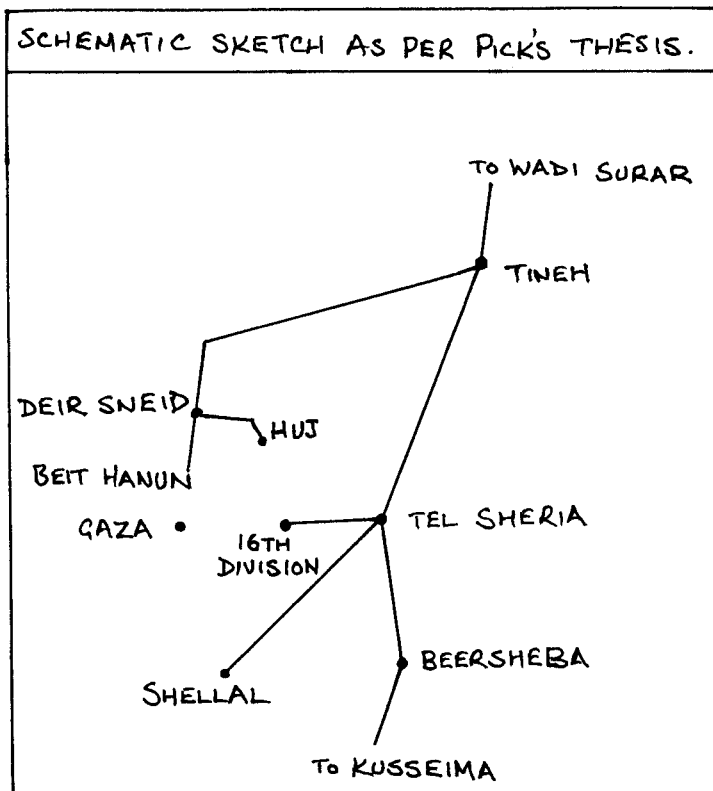
"This line was built, possibly about January 1917, by utilising the taken-up rails of the Auja - Maghdaba 'tram line', in which case it must have been of 60cms. gauge. It started at the big station of Tel Sheria, on the trunk line to Beer Sheba, and went south-west for some 20 kms., to supply the important Turkish redoubts overlooking Shellal (today's area of Tel Sharuhen, the Nahal Bessor Bridge and Magen). The Shellal positions, using the steep banks of Wadi Beer Sheba (Nahal Bessor), blocked the threat of a British advance from Rafah to Beer Sheba, and also presented a threat to the flank of the British advance north, along the coast to Gaza. No trace whatever of this line remains today, probably because its narrow gauge necessitated few works, and these were wiped out in the course of time. Its only mention is preserved in the pages of Kress. The Sheria - Shellal line had only a short existence, as by the beginning of March 1917, following the British build-up for the first Battle of Gaza, the Shellal positions were voluntarily evacuated by the Turks, a task in which the line was of great help for transporting materiel to the rear. At least some of the rails were taken up again, to be re-used a third time."

Notes: 1. There is a sketch map in the thesis showing the location of this line; a copy is appended.

2. The reference to 'Kress von Kressenstein' as the only source of information is vague. A footnote in the thesis reads: Kress, pp.213, 216; but the actual published work is not stated. From Pick's comprehensive bibliography I suspect he was referring either to: "Kriegfuhrung in der Wüste" (Berlin 1920), or "Mit den Turken zum Suez Kanal", (Berlin 1938).

While down in this neck of the desert it is relevant to mention that Pick also added a paragraph on the Abu Hareira line, which he referred to as The "Tel Sheria - 16th. Division Branch":

"About the middle of March 1917, some 7-10 kms. of rail from the dismantled Shellal lines were relaid again, again from Tel Sheria station, this time however almost due west, unto the area held by the 16th. Turkish Division, about Abu Hareira Redoubt (today Tel Haror). Abu Hareira, about halfway between Gaza and Beer Sheba (and on today's main road between the two towns) was one of the key points of the Turkish front in southern Palestine. The new branch, presumably of 60 cms. gauge, and worked by animals, carried ammunition and supplies, until the whole front was rolled up by Allenby late in 1917. No trace whatever remains of this line, whose rails had by then served three Turkish railway branches (Maghdaba, Shellal and 16th. Division). This line was the last built by the Turks, i.e. presumably (the fact can only be surmised) by Meissner Pasha, or under his supervision, during the First World War in Palestine [see note below]. It was also the fourth and 1



No sooner had 'Harakevet' No. 22 been despatched than I saw a copy of the November 1993 issues of 'Steam Railway' (No. 163), with a note on the cover: "An 8F on the Seabed".

The article, by the editor Nigel Harris, on pages 22-25, is accompanied by several blue-toned (non-reproducible) underwater photos of parts of the ship and locos, and the text is:

"...Around 100 ft. beneath the surface of the Gulf of Jubal, the 8F is still quite unmistakable in outline - from the front at least. The buffers, front platform and smokebox are remarkably free of marine growth considering the 52 years the locomotive has spent on the seabed and the screw shackle, handrails and other fittings are clear to see. For all the world, it looks as though you could swim up to the engine, spin the dart handles and swing open the heavy smokebox door. The fact that the engine has come to rest on its wheels adds extra poignancy to the fascinating scene. The tender...lies a short distance away, also on its wheels.

The 8F was part of a cargo of war supplies en route from Britain to Suez, in support of 'Operation Crusader' - the British attempt to relieve Tobruk. [The 'Thistlegorm'], a general cargo vessel of 4,898 tons gross, had been built by J.L. Thompson & Sons Ltd. of Sunderland, and this was only her fourth voyage. Launched on April 8 1940 by Mrs. K.W. Black, of managers Allan Black & Company, the ship was owned by the Albyn Line Ltd. She was one of a group of ships whose names were prefixed with 'Thistle' - 'gorm' being Gaelic for 'blue'. A single-screw ship, she was driven by a triple-expansion compound steam engine.

"Thistlegorm" had sailed from Glasgow, via Table Bay in the Cape, laden with Bedford trucks, BSA 350cc despatch riders motor cycles, lee Enfield .303 rifles, fighter aircraft wings, ammunition, shells, land mines, pick axes, wellington boots and other general stores - with the railway stock lashed to the after deck. Capable of 10½ knots and with a crew of 39 seamen and nine gunners under the command of Captain William Ellis, the heavily laden ship carried just one 4.7 in. gun on her stern and a single anti-aircraft weapon.

On September 24 1941 the ship left Aden, joining 20 others waiting at anchor in the Strait of Jubal, moored at 'Anchorage F' which was thought to be a safe mooring in which to await further orders. However, at 2am. [on October 6th.] one of four Heinkel He111 bombers attacked the Thistlegorm, two of its bombs exploding amidst the railway locomotives and wagons on the after deck. The Thistlegorm immediately caught fire, the blaze rapidly spreading through the hull. Nine men were killed instantly, the remainder of the crew taking to the lifeboats; They were rescued by HMS Carlisle and landed at Suez.

The exploding ammunition unleashed a spectacular firework display in the night sky and when, after 20 minutes, the land mines exploded, the hull finally ripped apart and the Thistlegorm, just 18 months old, quickly sank. As she slipped

beneath the surface, the 8F must have rolled off the deck as its lashings gave way, coming to rest on the sea floor.

.....It would appear that the engine is one of four built by Beyer Peacock and first steamed during the early months of 1941. These were WD Nos. 428/9 and 433/4 (Beyer Peacock Nos. 7008/9 and 7013/4)...

The wreck of the Thistlegorm was first discovered in 1955 by legendary undersea explorer Jacques Cousteau...and illustrated in his book "The Living Sea". [This answers the query in Ed.]"

The photos show a tender looking quite intact, but the loco simply cut off after the first boiler ring !

Now - the plot thickens further. From Rick Tourret comes the following note: "There was an article in the Daily Express of 23rd. August 1993, with one or two photos.

Unfortunately, this presents a little bit of a puzzle. The date given is 6th. October 1941. However, in the period January to April 1941, 22 8F's were shipped to Egypt and four (WD 304/22 & 428/9) "lost en route". Between August 1941 and February 1942 a further 24 8F's were sent to Egypt, but apparently none were lost !

Perhaps the locos were en route to Turkey ? However, we know the ships on which the Turkish locos were sent... and they do not include SS Thistlegorm. Furthermore, whilst seven 8F's were lost en route, we know the ships and the dates, and again they do not include SS Thistlegorm !

Judging by the diagram in the article, there were also two SR-type guards vans on the ship.

The shipping dates are the 'official' despatch dates, so some voyage times can be added, but to stretch April 1941 despatch to October sinking seems a little dilatory !"

Further - your Editor has been reading through "War Cabinet Telegrams - Middle East", Vols. I to III - listing a wide selection of Situation Reports from the various theatres of war in this region; many attacks by Allied ships and aircraft on enemy shipping are listed, as are many accounts of enemy attacks on Allied shipping - but there is no mention of this particular attack or loss.

23:23

THE OPENING OF THE HBT.

Mr. D. J. Wilkinson of Middlesbrough was a Corporal in the RASC (Royal Army Service Corps) in 1942. He writes:

"One Sunday in December I was in Damascus, where one of the RASC lorries was loaded and without its regular driver. I was detailed to take over, drive it to an Army depot in Beirut, unload, reload and return to Damascus. I was alone and unescorted on that trip. It so happened that, on arrival, the depot staff were unable to deal with me at once and I had a period of waiting. I was completely alone, with nothing to do, except stand by my vehicle and its load. I looked over a nearby fence and I realised at once I was beside a military railway. One steam loco came by; I saw it was an O-6-0 (I had seen scores of that type as they were used on the coal traffic between the Durham pits and the steelworks of Teesside). [Possibly a DHP O-6-0. Ed.] The surprising thing about that one loco was that two military policemen were sitting on the coal in its tender. I was still alone, and could almost hear myself saying "This must be a pilot for something very important to follow". The next loco was a huge American one bedecked with flags. There were three - the Lebanese, American and British flags. On my side of the loco, the east side as it was travelling south to north, a senior British officer was leaning out of the cab. He had a rag in his left hand. As he drew near, I was able to count the pips and crowns on his shoulder insignia, and I realised I was facing the Commander-in-Chief, General Alexander. I gave him a salute, and he returned the salute with a very broad smile on his face. What surprised me even more (knowing the very strict censorship of wartime) was that General Alexander and the opening of the HBT had some world-wide publicity, and one of the photographs used in the press was the General exactly as I had seen him.

In 1943 I was commissioned. After a few months in Tripoli I made up my mind that one day I would arrange to do Beirut to Tripoli on the afternoon passenger train. It was not difficult to arrange. On the appropriate day I reported on time to HBT at Beirut, and I heard something that I didn't want to hear: "Sir, you are the only Officer travelling, so you will be O.C. Troops for the journey." Half the train was filled with troops of the Indian Army and the other half was taken up with three distinct groups: one Arab, another African and the third Australian. I had had experience of command, but my troops had always been like me: born of English-speaking parents in the UK. I was not looking forward to having to communicate with non-British personnel, which I might have to do in the event of an emergency ! I had one near-sneak part-way along the route. The train stopped. To my left was a straight drop to the waters of the Mediterranean, and to my right were high cliffs backed by mountains. Our driver and his assistant alighted from the loco and walked ahead. As far as I could tell by their actions there must have been a rock fall which impeded the train's progress.

I need not have worried. The journey continued; I reached my office in Tripoli, and as far as I can remember, I had no need to speak to anybody on that train."

SCULPTURES.

Israel seems to have quite a variety of sculptures contrived from pieces of railway ironmongery - sleepers, rails, bogies etc. One such item stands in Afule at the old station; I vaguely recall passing an item on the roadside near Ramat Gan (details, anyone?). Uri Ben-Rehav has sent details of two more such works of 'art':

a). In Jaffa - ca. 300m. from the former station, in the median strip between the two carriageways of the Jaffa-Tel Aviv road, (and thus on the route of the former 'Terezina' tramway) the Tel Aviv Municipality has recently erected a large "objet" created by Yigal Tomarkin, a well-known Israeli artist. It consists of a USATC bogie on a short stretch of standard-gauge track and several geometric shapes cut from steel plate, all painted a mid-blue.

b). At the "Tefen" Industrial Park in the Galilee are various items to divert attention from industrial utilitarianism. Some years ago I noted a little 60cm. gauge truck painted brown on a section of sculpted track; Uri has found another - a 60cm. gauge trolley bearing a rather phallic oxygen cylinder pointed directly at the outline of a lady's head!

The accompanying photos are taken from Uri's colour prints.

