

HARAKEVET

הרכבת

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28:1 SYMBOLIC OF MOVES FOR FUTURE REINSTATEMENT OF REGULAR TRAFFIC: CEL Polish (Cegielski) built Co-Co diesel loco 1203 of 1977 at Dbaiye, about 8km north of Beirut, on a freight train. The train is standing just before a level crossing which is being dug out from the mud!

(Photo: A J Wilson 27/1/95)

28:2. Editorial: Issue 28.

First - my thanks to all those correspondents who have commiserated with me in my sudden and unplanned 'mid-career change' ! In fact, I have kept very busy so far on a multitude of projects, but as yet have no new address to report - which makes producing the subscription form for the next series a bit of a conundrum.

In the meantime, I have decided to keep up the pace and get issue 28 into print - thus ending this Series - and to use up some items which have been waiting a while. There is still a lot of very good stuff on file - enough for another Series, I'd say ! Progress in Israel is happening thick and fast; in addition I am awaiting a full report by two British tourist railway experts on railway tourism projects in Jordan ! If the idea of Peace can be spread, then the future for the region's railways looks very interesting indeed.

So - enough of the personal problems ! Enjoy !
The Editor. March 1995.

28:3. More information on Rotem Fertiliser's 007 (See 27:4:d). According to an official, but crude outline diagram, this loco is a class SW1000 switcher built in 1994 by GM rather than EMD, which suggests that it was constructed in London, Ontario. Presumably, therefore, Canada Allied Diesel of Quebec acted as agents and not as dealers for a second-hand loco.

The loco is seen here shunting at Ashdod Port, 7th. Aug. 1994. Livery is bright yellow, with a small Canadian flag under the number on the right cabside and top of bonnet. (Notes: Paul Cotterell; Photo: Yaron Dozetaz).



28:4.

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

a). The Heavenly Jerusalem.... Among the more remarkable journalistic fancies surrounding Jerusalem's rapid-transit plans is this messianic one from the "Jewish Telegraph" for 30/11/94:

"Trains to Run in Sky ! Things are looking up in Jerusalem ! The Israeli capital may get a "train-in-the-sky" system. A survey has been ordered to see whether an elevated railway would work - and how much it would cost. Planners say it will clear the crowded roads and bring people to their destinations on time - with reliable timetables. Well, it is the city of miracles !" Oh boy.....

b). New I.R. General Manager. The new G.M. of IR, from 1/11/94, is Ehud Hadar, a graduate in Economics and Sociology from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem with a history of work in the Ports Authority.

c). For Whom Does the Bell Toll ? Uri Ben-Rehav reports, with sorrow, that the large station bell of PR vintage has been stolen from the Hall of the Haifa Museum; in addition PR tableware that was on display in the saloon coach has 'disappeared'...

d). Late Entries - resulting from the 'blockage' in November:

Some items from Steve Tish which, unfortunately, date back to October 1994 - and are thus hardly "News" any more, but are presented here 'for the record':

i). Passenger coaches 78, 605 and 606 were transferred to Haargaz on 4th. September for refurbishment.

ii). The Carmelit had to be closed for further work by the Swiss company Von Roll from 3rd. to 10th. September 1994.

iii). 'Koteret' for 30/9/94 had a three-page article on proposed reconstruction of the railway through Tzemach.

e). Cement Set. The daily trip working from Haifa to the Nesher Cement Company works near Tel Hanan finished running in the summer of 1994. The cement now goes by road. The track to Tel Hanan, once part of the Haifa branch of the Hedjaz Railway, is occasionally used for moving wagons into and out of storage at the Tel Hanan sidings.

f). The Bogey Strikes Again. There were disruptions to the main line service on 24/10/94 when a bogie on the leading flat wagon of freight 315

(Haifa-Bnei Berak) derailed between East and Central stations in Haifa at about 11.10. Train 5 (express to Tel Aviv made up of IC3 sets) was cancelled. Trains from Tel Aviv were curtailed to run to and from Haifa Central, instead of proceeding to Haifa East. The service to Nahariyya was also affected. The offending wagon was lifted and the line cleared for the resumption of traffic at 14.45 that afternoon.

g). Another Level Crossing Smash. On 2/11 Train 57 (15.27 Nahariyya-Tel Aviv) collided with a car on the main road level crossing between Zikhron Ya'akov and Binyamina. The occupants of the car managed to get out in time and nobody was injured. The car was brand new and the driver was unused to it, being unable to restart it after stalling across the tracks. As may be expected, disruptions were widespread with the main line being blocked for over an hour. Train 23 (IC3 set ex-Haifa) was halted at Atlit and returned to Bat Galim where its passengers were transferred to the following Train 59 which finally departed 45 minutes late. Other trains were delayed in either direction.

h). Back From the Dead. Swedish bo-bo T44 made its first main line outing since returning to Israel when it was deadheaded to Lod in freight 329 on 2/11. It was thought T44 was to become a shunting and trip loco based on Lod; however, by 19/1/95 it was noted working port traffic in Haifa, and may have been transferred back to Haifa depot.

i). LSWR Coach. The ex-LSWR Ambulance Coach featured in 26:11 is now ensconced on a back siding at the Railway Museum. It was fitted up with buffers and drawgear for the short journey from the port to the museum. A close inspection did not reveal any identification on the coach.

j). Carmelit Sell-Off. 'Yediot Aharonot' of 20/12/94 reported that the Minister of Finance has agreed to selling off the Carmelit underground cableway in Haifa to private investors. He also promised Haifa municipality that, if a buyer can be found, the Finance Ministry would cover 70% of the Carmelit's debts.

k). More Wagons. Harakevet 23:4:9 reported on new flat wagons from Wagonka Popard of the Czech Republic. A further sixteen of these 70-ton capacity wagons arrived from the same firm at an unknown date in 1994. They were shipped out in dismantled form and reassembled locally by contractors. Their numbers are 70 011 - 70, 026. On 22/12/94 they were all

tested at speeds up to 100 km/h between Lod and Qiryat Gat, headed by 'Jumbo' 614.

l). Liveries News. G12 bo-bo 111 has been repainted in the IC3 colours of white, light and dark blue, and red. The effect is decidedly startling. 111 made what is thought to be its first outing in its new colour scheme on 22/12 when it headed freight 314 from Haifa to Benei Berak. It was booked to return north with train 10 (express Tel Aviv - Nahariyya) but failed at Tel Aviv Merkaz and had to be replaced by the Binyamina pilot. 111 has had its small cabside windows blanked off, or perhaps has received cab sheets from another G12.

m). Dig Dig. It is a well-known truism that you can take a shovel to just about any square metre of Israel and, if you dig deep enough, come up with something ancient. On 10/1/95 'Yediot Aharonot' reported that 128 archaeological sites had been discovered in metropolitan Tel Aviv during the last few years. One of these, a Chalcolithic settlement dating back to 4000 BCE, had been found some 4 metres below the old/new Tel Aviv Central Station, the main building of which is used as entrance for the new station. The paper did not report the discovery of any pre-historic railway remains at the site.

n). Oh Dear ! IR was severely embarrassed on 9/1/95. It had been arranged, for operating purposes, that Train 53 (Nahariyya - Tel Aviv) should have its last two coaches detached at Haifa East before continuing on its journey, with passengers being brought forward to the front part of the train. Unfortunately, messages got lost in the pipeline with the result that two coachloads of passengers were left stranded at Haifa East. Among the customers left behind was a Member of the Knesset who telephoned the Minister of Transport in Jerusalem to complain. Harsh words were passed on to IR management in Tel Aviv with dire reprisals threatened for those responsible for the foul-up. Embarrassment was compounded when the newspapers picked up the story.

[Editor's note - no-one seems to have learned from the incident I reported in 25:8(c) !]

o). More Incidents. At about 12.30 on 30/1/95 a freight train derailed between Dimona and Beersheba. The line was cleared by the next morning. Also that day train 10 (15.00 Tel Aviv - Nahariyya express) was held outside Bat Galim station for twenty minutes when a suspicious object was discovered in the station.

p). Doubling. Double track was brought into use between Netanya and Kfar Vitkin on 14/2/95.

q). Suicide. On 20/2 Train 42 (0600 Tel Aviv - Haifa) ran over and killed a suicide as it approached Kfar Vitkin. This was on the recently-opened double-track section which meant that the following Train 44 could be bought alongside for loading passengers off the halted Train 42, thereby easing the disruption to traffic. Even so there were delays of up to twenty minutes to other trains, while the unfortunates aboard Train 42 arrived in Haifa some 50 minutes late. After release by police at the accident site Train 42 worked to Haifa as empty stock.

r). French Coaches. New arrivals in Israel (via Kishon Port on 15/12/94) are some second-hand SNCF stainless steel 2nd.-class coaches. Numbers notified are:

5087-20.77-127-0.

5087-20.77-131-2.

5087-20.77-141-1.

5087-20.77-143-7.

5087-20.77-144-5.

5087-20.77-147-8.

5087-20.77-148-6.

5087-20.77-149-4.

All were built by Carel Fouché, in 1965 apart from the first (No. 127), which was built 1958.

The coaches cleared Customs and reached Haifa East by 16/12, then on 19/12 were sent to Lod on Train 303 (dep. 01.00), en route to Haargaz, who have apparently purchased them direct from SNCF with the intention of renovating them to cover whilst other IR stock is being refurbished, to avoid a shortage of rolling-stock during the work. From cards remaining on the vehicles it appeared they most recently worked on routes Paris St. Lazaire - Rouen/Dieppe, Caen/Cherbourg/Deauville/Trouville.

They will have airconditioning fitted, plus some electrical work, some work on windows and other minor jobs, and are expected to remain at Haargaz for a few months while this work is done, before being loaned or hired to IR. The stainless-steel finish will be retained, although special cleaning may be done. After the refurbishment programme is completed they will be sold to IR by Haargaz, and it is understood that the ex-BR Mk. 2's will then be withdrawn, apparently due to the deteriorating condition of the bodywork.

A newspaper photo ('Yediot Aharonot' 27/12/94) of the data panel on 141

shows the following legend:

"B 10½t 38t 44t 84 Pl."

s). Coach Refurbishment Progress. Further to d) (i) above, Steve Tish adds: Refurbished Esslingen coaches Nos. 114Bet, 116Bet and 117Bet were returned, refurbished, from Haargaz in IC3 livery on 12/1/95. They have paint dates as follows:

114: 20/11/94.

116: 24/11/94.

117: 28/12/94.

These three coaches were the first to carry the new IR symbol.

115Bet was returned in late December, and entered service on 25/12/94; however, it has no paint date, and does not carry the new logo.

There are no further Esslingen coaches to be refurbished now at Haargaz, and as at 16/1/95 the only three coaches present were those sent in September '94 (i.e. 78, 605 & 616.)

114, 116 & 117 operated in passenger service from 15/1/95, and formed a special train from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on 16/1/95, which entrained/detrained its passengers at the old Tel Aviv South station, this being the first 'passenger train' to serve the station since its closure. This train was formed of all-refurbished coaches, comprising: 111/112Bet/113Bet/114Bet/115Bet/116/Bet/117Bet/53.

28:5. OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAY NOTES & NEWS.

a). No more Turbos for Iran ? According to 'Today's Railways No. 5, p.56, the SNCF has withdrawn further T 2000 "Turbotrains", sets T2051/52 & 2063/64 from Caen depot, from September 1994, "after their projected sale to Iran fell through". Iran has several such sets; an article on their transport to Iran appeared in 'Vie du Rail' 1501 in July 1975, pp.6f, and one on the use of "RTG" sets on the Teheran-Mashad route appeared in 'Viedu Rail' 1494 of 25/5/75, p.12.

b). According to 'Fahrplancenter News', Syria is to purchase a large number of new wagons - and, other sources say, substantial orders for new diesel locos are also to be placed.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

a). Re. 27:1 and the comment in the caption: Paul Cotterell states that the bracket semaphore signal seen above the third coach of the train was the down advanced starter for tracks 1 & 2 of Haifa East (Mizrach) station (only removed in favour of colour lights in the summer of 1994). The layout here has altered over the years but it may have been the practice in the 1950's for this signal to double also as an up home signal for trains running into East station from Haifa Central, even though such trains would only see the rear of the signal arms [and no lamps. Ed.] This practice, though unorthodox, was not entirely unknown elsewhere, even in certain more remote areas of Britain. The train is evidently arriving on track 1, and at lower right of the photo is track 2.

Another possibility is that, immediately after the passage of the train hauled by 103, the down advanced starter has already been pulled off for the next scheduled down departure from track 1. This would hardly have been in accordance with the rule book, but since when have signalmen always gone by the book? A third possibility - the least likely of all I think - is that the train has been backed out of the station for its photo to be taken. This would be in direct contravention of all the rules, but could explain the left hand arm of the signal being in the off position.

It may be noted here, also, that the signals seen in this photo were products of the Railway Signal Company of Liverpool which seems to have provided the majority of the semaphore signals installed by the British during the Mandate period. A known exception to this is Bet Shemesh station on the Jerusalem line where the signals are stamped Saxby & Farmer. These are, however, to the Railway Signal Co. design and not of the distinctive Saxby & Farmer design once to be seen at locations in Britain.

All semaphore signals at Haifa East station were replaced by colour lights during 1993-4, though their replacement was spread over twelve months or so as the new colour lights were progressively installed. Track alterations were also made during this period.

b). Re: 27:18. In reply to Rick Tourret's query in 27:8, Paul can confirm that the stone bridge over Nahal Tabor just south of Jisr-el-Mejamie is still standing, as he took a photo of it in October 1994.

c). Re. 27:21: Major Tubby Robins of the Museum of Army Transport says that he has seen excerpts and variants of this bogus order. He adds: "The

Army is quite good at this sort of thing. One speciality was to produce lists of stores (AFG 1098's) for apocryphal units (A unit entitlement of stores comes on form AFG 1098 and is your authority to demand and hold them.) I remember one was a "Field Baptismal Unit RA Ch D" [Royal Artillery - Church Division ? Ed.] amongst which appeared "Strings Harps Angels Spare" and "Pearly Gates Left - 1 no." and "Pearly Gates Right - 1 no.", and so on."

d). Re: 27:8. Donald Silk writes that the land at Afule was indeed, as he understands, bought by the American Zion Commonwealth, in order to build a city. (He cannot understand the reference to Herzliyya.) A number of people bought land in the area and there was a joke extant at the time about a Polish judge who said that he had bought some land at Afule. When asked where, he replied "Oh, next to the opera, of course!" After the war, people coming out of Poland were able to reclaim their land and get a start in life.

'The Sapper' for Feb. 1995, p.46, reports the death of 1561582 ex-L/Sgt. Ernest James Rising on 14th. dec. '94, aged 79. He served with 189 Rly. Optg. Coy. R.E. from June 1940 - Feb. 1946, in the Middle East and Italy.



28:7. A French coach seen undergoing initial work at the Haargaz Works. (Photo: Steve Tish.)

INTERNATIONAL PLANS.

From "Lloyds List" of 7th. Sept. 1994, sent in by Albert Thomas; an article on plans for international development following the Middle East Peace Process. Presumably based on the Casablanca conference papers, it includes certain Americanisms and journalistic inaccuracies. The article includes:

"Development of a regional rail link between Israel and Jordan is also under consideration.

An extensive railroad system was built in the Middle East at the beginning of this century, connecting Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Eretz, Israel [sic !], Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Regional conflicts and a lack of economic development caused the dismemberment and collapse of this system in both physical and economic terms.

The coming era of peace and economic development in the region opens new prospects for renewal and modernisation of a regional railroad system as a powerful impetus for economic development.

A rail link would improve the access and transport connections between the countries, while capitalising on the strategic geographical potential of the region as a crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa.

The proposed railroad link would be part of a regional railroad system, and would provide a land-link between Jordan and Mediterranean ports, and between Israel and the Gulf and east Asia.

A rail link would necessitate the preparation of common standards for modernising the railroad system of the two countries.

Projects proposed include:

- Renewal of the Hejaz track between the Port of Haifa and Amman.
- establishment of a link between the Red Sea ports (Aqaba and Eilat) and Mediterranean ports (Ashdod and Gaza).
- establishment of a connection between the potash works on the the Dead Sea (Sodom in Israel and A-Zafi in Jordan) and the Red Sea and Mediterranean ports.

During the first half of this century, a 1.05m gauge railway track existed between Haifa and Amman, passing via Dar'a in Syria and proceeding both north to Damascus and south to Medina in Saudi Arabia.

The track between Dar'a and Amman continues to operate, albeit at obsolete standards and narrow gauge. the Hejazi track between Amman and Aqaba via Maan is still in existence.

The purpose of this project would be to establish a link between Jordan

and the Mediterranean ports by building a modern railroad between Amman and Haifa across a distance of some 260 km.

The first stage of the project would be an engineering and feasibility study.

The project spans three countries:

- In Israel, a new track would be constructed on the alignment of the Valley Railroad from Haifa to El-Hama across a distance of about 100km.
- In Syria (along the Syria-Jordan border) a new track would be constructed from El-Hama to Dar'a across a distance of about 70 km.;
- In Jordan, the existing track between the border (near El-Hama) and Amman would be rehabilitated and converted into a standard track line of about 90 km. long.

With the railroad link between the Red Sea and Mediterranean ports, Israel's railroad network ends in the south at Mount Zin Phosphate Terminal. An active line runs from there to the Mediterranean (Ashdod).

Israel has recently completed preliminary planning toward the construction of a track between Mount Zin and Eilat on the Red Sea, over a distance of 170 km along the border between Jordan and Israel in the Arava, costing approximately \$400M.

A rail connection with the port of Aqaba can be built in the Eilat area from the Arava line of a distance of about 15 km, creating a link with the Jordanian railroad system from the entrance to Wadi Yatem to the port of Aqaba.

The track connection to Gaza can be renewed by rehabilitating about 15 km of track between Ashkelon and Gaza, a track which was in operation until the 1970s.

The purpose of the project would be the connection of the Aqaba and Eilat ports with Israel's existing railroad network, thereby creating a railroad link between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean ports of Ashdod and Gaza, as part of a regional railroad system.

The track connection between Eilat and Aqaba will provide an impetus for co-operation between the ports of Israel and Jordan with a streamlining and specialisation of operations.

The Jordanian potash works at A-Zefi exported about 1.2M tons of potash in 1992, while the Israeli Dead Sea works carry 0.6M tons annually to the port of Eilat.

A railroad to be built from Mount Zin to Eilat and Aqaba via Hatzeva will connect the Dead Sea enterprises of both countries with the railroad network reaching both the Mediterranean and Red Sea ports.

The initial stage of the proposed project would require an engineering and economic feasibility study, including preliminary planning.

- The project would entail:
- in Israel construction of a track from Hatzeva to Sodom for a distance of some 40 km.
 - in Jordan, construction of a branch south of Sodom to the Jordanian enterprise near A-Zafi, about 20 km long."

Brave dreams. Let us hope.....

28.9. UPWARDLY MOBILE. By Paul Cotterell.

Recently received is the 1993 Financial Accounts and Statement of The Ports & Railways Authority, a typical and obligatory lavishly illustrated publication dear to the heart of a modern major corporation's Chief Executive Officer. The following figures show IR's performance over a five-year period:

Year	Passengers.(Millions)	Freight.(Million tons)
1989	2.25	6.4
1990	2.50	7.0
1991	2.75	7.6
1992	3.4	8.5
1993	3.8	8.7

The above figures are approximate and outline only, since the report does not give more precise details.

Freight traffic for 1993 is broken down into categories as follows:

- Minerals 47.8%.
- Coal 26.3%
- Containers 12.2%
- Grain 9.0%
- Miscellaneous 4.7%.

One quite remarkable extrapolation to be made from the above freight list is that 'Jumbo' 701, in dedicated use on the coal trains to the new Rutenberg power station, is responsible for hauling about 20-25% of the total freight traffic on IR ! (This takes into account those periods when it is out of service for maintenance or whatever). I wonder if just one loco anywhere else can lay claim to such a major share of a main line railway's traffic. [NB: Measured by tons, not ton-miles; it works a comparatively short merry-go-round circuit. Ed.]

No attempt is made here to present financial returns. The report is coy on this point, preferring to lump together the figures for the Ports Authority and Israel Railways.

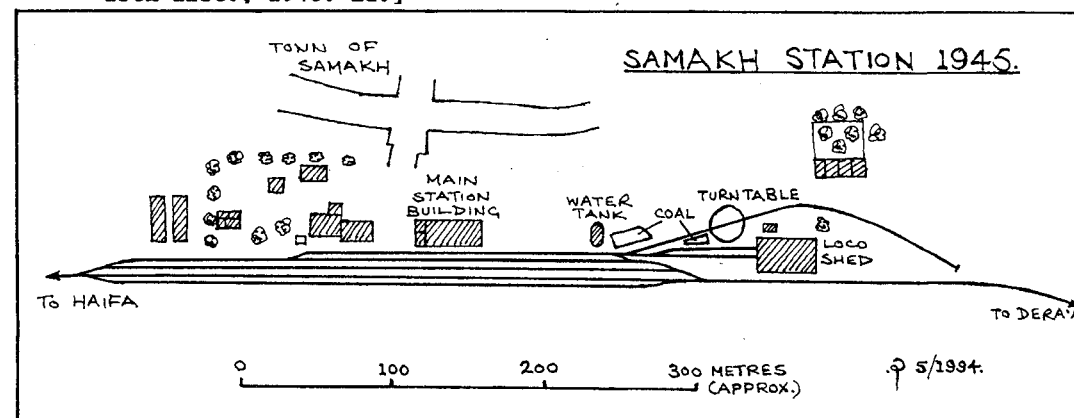
28.10. SAMAKH STATION. By Paul Cotterell.

Since I made a brief allusion to the layout at Samakh station in 24:15 it seems only right and proper to follow up with a more detailed plan. The accompanying sketch is based on an official map of 1945, kindly photocopied for me by Benny Haspel of Tel Aviv University where he is an archivist. The original map, to a scale of 1:1,000, had first been published by the Survey of Palestine in November 1925, being revised and redrawn in 1945. I daresay that the railway layout itself had required little in the way of cartographical alterations over the intervening years.

Photographic evidence points up something I find peculiar about operating practices at this and other Hedjaz Railway stations. It appears that passenger trains entered stations on the main through running line which meant that people had to stumble across the intervening tracks between their coach and the station building (a practice which is still alive and well, endangering life and limb and ruining shoe leather at Haifa East station today). To further complicate matters the inner lines (i.e. those between the through road and the station building) were used for freight traffic. This entailed dividing rakes of standing goods wagons to provide a passage for passengers to reach their train. One would have thought that better arrangements could have been made when the HR stations were originally laid out, though it must be admitted that very similar practices are still to be encountered around the world and, no doubt, Meissner Pasha did not look to Britain for his design standards when laying out the Hedjaz Railway.

It is well known that Samakh station was the site of a battle in September 1918 (See 6:10); less well known is the fact that at least one fierce engagement took place here in Israel's War of Independence. I have seen a published photo of a machine gun nest set up between the tracks opposite the station building, but have no precise details of the skirmish itself.

[Note: The layout of stations with combined passenger and goods facilities on the same side of the tracks is very common throughout Europe. According to "The Arab-Israeli Wars" by Chaim Herzog the battle at Samakh (Tzemach) took place on May 15th-21st., 1948. Ed.]



28.11. MILITARY RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. B. S. Healy of Ovington, Northumberland, served as a Lieutenant in the 603rd. Construction Squadron, Royal Engineers, in the Middle East from 1946 to 1948. He describes himself as "a civil engineer but not a railway man." He writes:

"My memory is a bit hazy but I believe I was on detachment in Palestine from late '46 to early '47. The purpose of this detachment was to build some sort of building for the Palestine Railways at a place called El Jiya in Southern Palestine. This was also an Ordnance Depot for the British Army. At this time the northern sidings (see map in 26:12) served Engineering Stores, Ordnance Stores and RASC Stores. The Ordnance unit was attached to 6th. Airborne Division as were the RASC (air transport ?) unit. I also remember a small factory producing precast terrazzo units for installation in Army camps. There was also a small Railway Operating unit with Indian Army personnel commanded by an Indian Staff Sergeant (he was very fond of his "char" !). I remember seeing an American-made 'Pug' shunting locomotive in use. Also in the area was a 'Camp Barbara' where the remaining elements of General Anders' Polish Corps were stationed (women as well as men.)

Referring to the eastern sidings, all I remember is that it was up a hill, and that some unit of the RASC was there, but what went on I have no idea. There was little or no connection with our Mess.

I was stationed at El Jiya a second time in 1947, uplifting the track on the northern sidings, which I can see quite clearly in my mind's eye, but again I am vague about the eastern depot. I seem to remember that different units of the Ordnance and Service Corps were there as well as a unit of the Arab Legion.

In 1947 I was stationed in Tobruk where I was involved in maintaining the Tobruk-Fort Capuzzo section of the Western Desert Railway in Cyrenaica. Later that same year I joined the rest of the Squadron in Suez from where we journeyed to Palestine - I think to Sarafand. The purpose behind this move was to increase the railway capacity of the British Army bases in preparation for Palestine becoming the HQ of Middle East Land Forces. A change of policy at the Foreign Office quickly changed our role into taking up all the rail track in the Army depots throughout Palestine prior to our withdrawal in 1948. This involved lifting and recovering the rails which were then transported to El Arish in Egypt. I was demobilised in 1948.

Regarding my training; in my time the R.E. Transportation (Railway) Depot was at Longmoor Camp in Hampshire. It was there that both Operating and Construction skills were taught. In my case I did not go there but finished up in railway construction by a somewhat devious route. I was commissioned in the R.E. as a Works Services Officer, but on arrival in the Middle East along with numerous other subalterns was interviewed prior to posting. As I was then of the opinion that building railways was far more interesting than building army camps I asked to be considered for transfer to that branch. I attended a subsequent interview at GHQ Cairo and was successful (I think because I was a graduate civil engineer and had done some railway work during the vacation).

Oddly enough I was recalled to the Army in 1953 (?) under the 'Z' Class Call-up and spent a very interesting fortnight at Longmoor with 252 Railway Maintenance Squadron. This supplementary reserve squadron was composed almost entirely of Officers and NCO's from British Railways - the old Great Western Railway, and had been in existence since (I think) the '14-'18 war.

I am unable to say when 603 Squadron was formed, but I know that prior to arriving in the Canal Zone, probably in '46, they had taken part on operations in North-West Europe. I think that when I joined them they had a permanent detachment in Greece - but I'm not sure. I doubt very much that many of the personnel had been employed on any railway work in civil life.

Turning to the Western Desert Railway: the length of track for which we were responsible was from Tobruk to Fort Capuzzo, i.e. that section of the railway that lay in Cyrenaica, then under British Mandate (1947). There was no traffic as such and we were only involved in a Care and Maintenance basis. This necessitated patrolling the track in rail cars. These were converted 3-ton trucks fitted with rail wheels. As you may well understand the trucks were unable to run in reverse for long periods or distances, and as there were no turntables or loops, the truck had to be turned round on the track. Each truck had a sleeper bolted permanently to its underside at about the centre of balance. To turn the truck about a single jack was produced and put into position centrally beneath the sleeper and, while the occupants sat on the tail, the vehicle was carefully (very carefully!) jacked up so that the front wheels came off the track. Everyone then jumped off allowing the rear wheels to come free, whereupon the truck was rotated to face the opposite way to which it had been running. The process was then repeated; the rear wheels aligned to the track and the jack knocked away allowing the front wheels to thump down onto the rails - a

heart-stopping experience ! Much fun was had in driving these things; stopping them was another matter !"

A brief resumé of Mr. Healy's military career:

- Commissioned May '46 from R.E. O.C.T.U. (Officer Cadet Training Unit), Newark.
- School of Military Engineering, Chatham, June '46
- Posted to Middle East - journey via Calais and then by train to Toulon and onwards by sea to Alexandria.
- Transit and Reception camp in Canal Zone, Egypt. Interview GHQ, Cairo, then posted to 603 Railway Construction Squadron at Geneifa, Bitter Lake, July '46. Took over detachment at Ataka (Suez), worked on railway sidings at port liaising with Egyptian State Railways.
- Posted to Palestine, late '46 - El Jiya.
- Early '47 - Rejoined Squadron at Tobruk via GHQ Fayed in Canal Zone.
- Squadron transferred to Suez. I stayed at Tobruk with detachments of German POW's maintaining Western Desert Railway, Tobruk to Fort Capuzzo.
- Rejoined Squadron via Port Said for imminent departure to Palestine.
- Palestine (Beit Nabala) commenced extending track at depot.
- Detached to El Jiya to uplift track.
- Detached to other locations. One was north of Acre, which was then Middle East School of Artillery, uplifted track but can't remember name. [Napoleon's Hill ? Ed.] Another posting was definitely Azzib, possibly early '48.
- 603 Sqdn. moved to Haifa.
- Returned home for demobilisation, March '48; sailed from Haifa.



28.12. CEL diesel shunter 602 (bearing no number) shunting at Chekka, 15th. Feb. 1995. Note the ex-steam whistle - much nicer than the EMD air horn (also functional). (Photo: Andy Wilson.)

MORE NOTES FROM LEBANON & SYRIA.

28.13.

Andy Wilson finished his duties in Beirut at the end of February. Prior to that he had pursued railway interests (see his notes in 27:10) and writes:

"I don't think CEL operated anything in January until the run on 27th. Jan. - hence the big problems with mud all over the level crossings. They did another run on 2nd. Feb. - I didn't see it, but flange-marks etc. had been left at level crossings.

On 23rd. Jan. I caught 1203 in the yard at Beirut just before it was put away. I'm not sure why it had been out of the shed but I guess it had been doing a shunt before I turned up. Note the urban background to 1203 in the Beirut yard - the 1945 era pictures are mostly taken looking the same way (because of the sunlight). In fact the Beirut yard and depot is probably mostly as it was in HBT times. The office has a notice board outside, surmounted by a badge in typical army style.

On 24th. Feb. I called at the Beirut depot, and the Chief there informed me that rail operations have been suspended for one year while a new motorway crossing is built across the Nahr el Kelb ('Dog River'), about 12km. north of Beirut. He said the line will then be diverted and reinstated.

It is probable a run was made to Chekka on Feb. 16th., though not since. On the 24th. itself, he said, 1203 and some flat wagons were out on materials recovery at the Nahr el Kelb area - but although I looked around in the area, I couldn't see it, though the rails had clearly been used very recently. Maybe the train had gone on to Jounieh yard, which I couldn't check out.

Re: Syria: Never reported to my knowledge: There is, at Cadem, yard (and seen on the 1991 TEFS tour) a narrow-gauge Baldwin tender converted to a mazout carrier; the frame extends a little at the back of the tank (to support a toolbox, presumably); it must therefore be from J&J No. 4 or 5, because the earlier ones had the tank flush with the rear of the frame.

[Ed. notes: If this is so - it is the last remaining rolling relic (albeit regauged) of the old Jaffa-Jerusalem line !]

28:14.

CYPRUS NOTES.

Is Cyprus part of the 'Middle East' and therefore under the remit of 'Harakevet' ? Uri Ben-Rehav hopes so - he recently (mid-1994) went to northern Cyprus - the "Turkish Republic of North Cyprus", which is acknowledged by almost no international body. There used to be a narrow-gauge railway there until 1951, and Uri found - much to his surprise - two locos, a coach - (very derelict), and buildings, including a station, loco shed and ashpit.

-17-

Tongue in cheek, I shall print the following exactly as Paul wrote it..... Ed.

"It was ten years ago, while living in Canada, that I first heard from one Walter Rothschild. Somehow, through channels both various and devious, he had managed to breach my seclusion with a letter. After introducing himself (no, he wasn't one of THE Rothschilds unfortunately), he told me, inter alia, of a trip he'd made through the Jordan Valley a few years previously. He had, he said, seen the cab of a steam loco lying near the ruins of the Rutenberg Power Station at Naharayim. I was much taken aback by this intelligence, for I had not caught even a whiff of such a loco in my researches. Did the guy know what he was talking about? After all, I'd never heard of him before. Could his report really be credited? Nevertheless, polite and considerate as usual, I wrote back; and being in no position to chase up his supposed sighting, stored it in my mental filing cabinet until such time as I should return to Israel. When I did, towards the end of 1986, I set about arranging a car and driver to get me to Naharayim. Eventually, in the spring of 1987, all was ready and the journey undertaken. Then, literally at the last moment and within sight of the power station, my driver chickened out. It was the barbed wire border fence, mined strip alongside it, and the Jordanian soldiers patrolling just beyond, which put him off. So, with extreme reluctance and frustration on my part, we turned back.

In the subsequent years Walter's initial report was bolstered by the tales of other travellers. Not all of them corresponded exactly by any means, but it was becoming increasingly obvious that something of more than passing interest was to be found at Naharayim. My frustration and determination grew. At long last, in October 1994, I was able to go back to Naharayim and discover for myself just what was to be seen.

The approach was from near Kibbutz Gesher, just off the main road through the Jordan Valley, and right by the old - and still complete - HR bridge spanning the River Jordan. (See Plate 36 in 'Hedjaz Railway'.) Here the Israeli border patrol was found in the shade of a tree, drinking Cokes, "Sure, no problem driving through to Ashdot Ya'akov - enjoy yourself." After a short dusty drive through date palms, and with the green trickle of the Jordan River at this time of year just below, the observation point was reached. From here is a fine view across much of the ruined power station site. A 70-200mm zoom lens racked out to its longest focal length made a perfectly adequate substitute for binoculars or telescope. And yes, sure enough, over there to the left was the cab of a steam loco among the weeds.

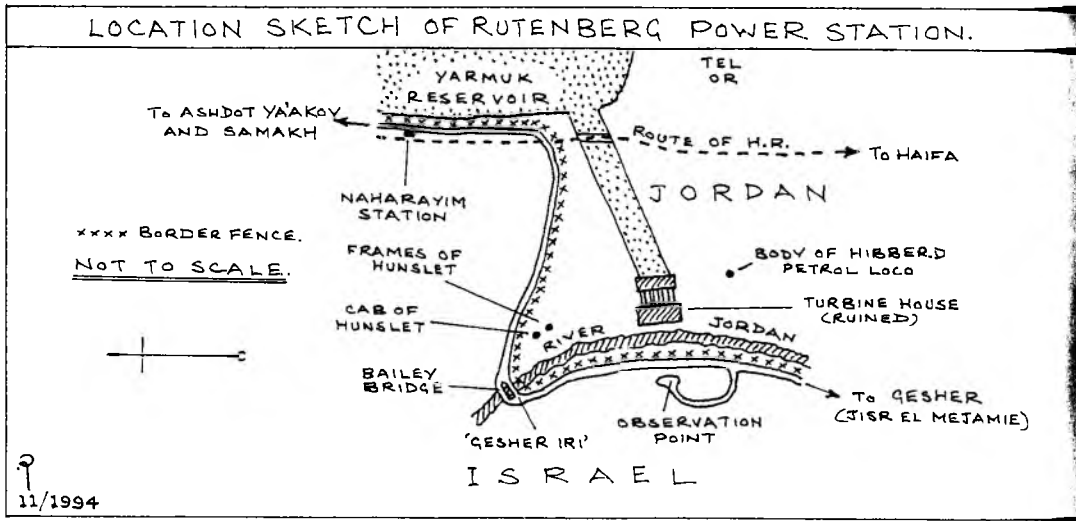
Very distinctive: Hunslet 60cm. gauge WDLR 4-6-0T for certain. A few metres to the right were the frames and bunker. Disappointingly, there was no sign of the boiler and side tanks, though these might be hidden in the tall weeds.

It was Andy Robson who made out a second loco to the right of the turbine house - I'd not recognised the rusty remains for what they are. "It's a Simplex", he said. "No, it's not", I said, having previously searched through yellowing files of the Palestine Electric Corporation and discovered that they'd once owned a Hibberd petrol/paraffin loco of 60cm. gauge. It certainly looked like one of those WW1 armour-plated Simplexes and, while precise details of this particular specimen are unknown, it must have been more or less a straight copy of the Simplex design by Hibberd. The PEC had acquired it about 1928, but it may have been built before then and arrived second-hand in Palestine. The empty body and chassis looked remarkably like the empty shell of a long-dead tortoise. Discovery of the Hibberd remains was a distinct bonus, for no-one else had reported them previously. Probably, like me, they did not realise what they were looking at.

As can be seen from the very rough and ready accompanying sketch, bits and pieces of the Hunslet 4-6-0T lie less than fifty metres from 'our side'. Most frustrating! Several people have expressed an interest in retrieving the remains, and the recent peace settlement between Israel and Jordan may give encouragement and even impetus to such a project. Quite possibly, though, the border may have moved by the time this appears in print. The River Jordan curves round to the east, just north of the Bailey bridge, and the Jordanians are claiming back land which would make the river a continuous border in this sector. If what is left of the Hunslet is to be extracted extracted then presumably the job will have to be done before the border is finalised. There is another possible complication. The loco may be lying in a minefield.....

"Gesher Iri" means a ford. A literal translation is "Irish Bridge". Since Israelis do not indulge in anti-Irish jokes one supposes that this term is a leftover from the British Mandate. There is more than one 'Gesher Iri' in Israel, though most have now been replaced by a proper bridge capable of taking road traffic. In consequence the term seems to be disappearing from the vocabulary, but can be found on maps of a certain vintage. The 'Gesher Iri' at Naharayim is more sophisticated than others, with wooden planking laid over barrels on the normally shallow stream."

[Note: "Irish Bridge" was a term used quite extensively in British Army engineering vocabulary. Ed.]



2. Remains of the 60cm. gauge Hunslet 4-6-0T at the Rutenberg Power Station at Naharayim on 5th. Oct. 1994. At lower left is the cab, at right are the bunker and frames. At top left is the border fence with the dirt patrol road just beyond on the Israeli side. (Photos 1, 2 & 4 - Paul Cotterell).



3. Naharayim station not long after it had opened in 1937. A Hartmann 2-8-2 calls with an afternoon train to Haifa. (Paul Cotterell Collection).



4. Naharayim station on 5th. Oct. 1994, also looking towards Samakh. The HR track ran to the left of the building, among the weeds and a minefield! Just out of the photo to the right is the border fence. The architectural resemblance to a period petrol station will be noted.



1. Looking across the power station site from the observation point on the Israeli side of the River Jordan. A corner of the turbine house can be seen at lower left. At right is the body of the Hibberd petrol locomotive. 5/10/94.

28:16. IRAQ RAILWAY STAMPS. By Alfred Khalastchy.

Freddy Khalastchy is the nephew of Naim Dangoor, who provided me with the 'Iraq Directory' excerpts serialised in issues 26 & 27; this was in fact published by Dangoor's Printing and Publishing House (which was owned by Naim Dangoor's father), under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior.

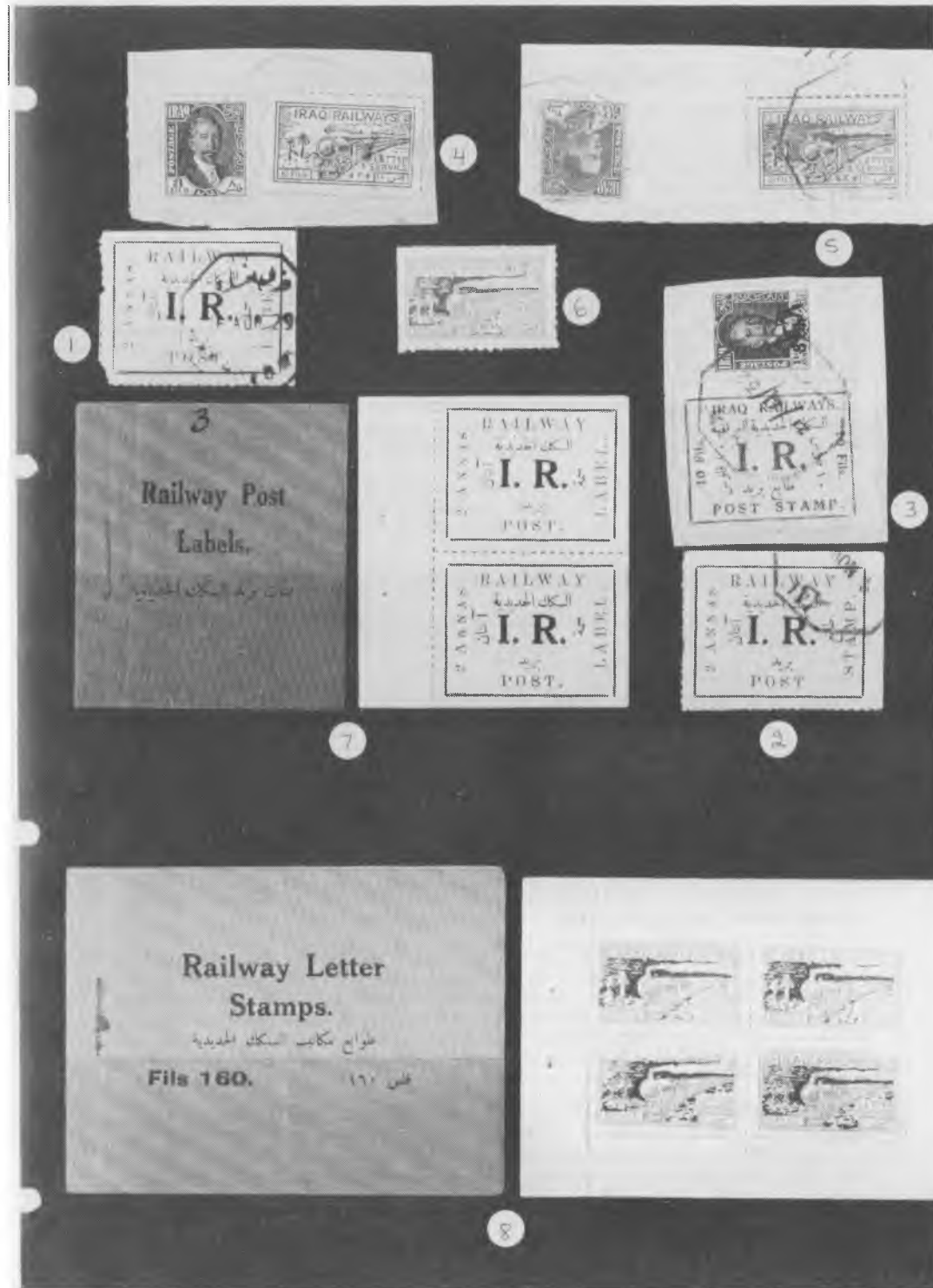
He writes:

"In the 1920's and 1930's special railway stamps were used in Iraq. I do not know exactly from what date to what date. There were six different stamps in use over the years. The first type was an inscribed label and had a value of 2 annas (Fig.1). The second type was similar to the first but was an inscribed stamp instead of a label (Fig.2). The third type was also an inscribed stamp but had a value of 10 fils instead of 2 annas (Fig.3). The next three types all showed a train and had a value of 10 fils. In each type the train is in blue but the colour of the sky differs; in one type it is red, in another yellow, and in the third it is orange. (Figs 4,5 & 6.)

The first three types came in a booklet containing eight pairs of stamps. The train types came in a booklet containing four blocks of four. (Figs. 7 & 8).

Letters or postcards could be handed in at most of the railway stations in Iraq to be forwarded by the first available train in passenger service to other railway stations or to post offices in Iraq for delivery or onward transmission by post to any foreign country. This service afforded a convenient means of despatching letters from places situated some distance from a post office or for forwarding letters at a time when local post offices were closed. This service carried a surcharge of 2 annas (10 fils after changing the currency). The charge for inland service was the ordinary inland postage rate plus a special railway fee of 2 annas (later 10 fils). The charge for the foreign service was the ordinary foreign postage plus a special railway fee of 2 annas (10 fils.) Letters could be posted for onward transmission by airmail on payment of the airmail fee in addition to the post and railway letter fee. The weight limit for a railway post letter was 80 grammes.

The Ottoman Bank and the Khanakin Oil Company were the main users of the railway letter service before 1930, but it became more popular after that and private users took advantage of the service about the time when the train type stamps appeared."



28:17. "The Origins of the Hebrew Railway."

By Isaac Nissan (formerly Nissenbaum).

Isaac Nissan, of Haifa, is a former Principal of the Haifa Technion; in 1947 he worked for Palestine Railways, at one period as Personal Assistant to the General Manager, Arthur Kirby. In this memoir (translated from the Hebrew, with thanks to Anat Tepler) he recalls that fraught period:

"As a result of the U.N. decision concerning the partition of Palestine into two countries, Jewish and Arab (29/11/47), discussions began amongst several employees of the Palestine Railways in Eretz Israel (Moshe Paicovitch, Y. Efrati and Y. Nissan) concerning the continuation of the administration of the railways, which at that period was the major means of transport of both passengers and goods in the country. Some were of the opinion that there would be no place for railways in the small country that would be formed from the Partition.

My opinion was that the population of the country would be concentrated, and the means of transportation that would be most suited would be the railways; Also I expressed the opinion that, with a state of peace with the neighbouring states, the railway would continue to be the bridge of communication between the countries of the Middle East.

At that period the railways of Palestine (Eretz Israel) operated from Kantara in the Sinai area to Rabbat Ammon and Amman in Jordan. There was also a railway link with Syria and Lebanon (Lebanon did not yet exist as an independent civil state) and also there were discussions that had begun in the time of Arthur Kirby concerning the rail link via Turkey to Europe.

The discussions came to the conclusion that we needed to ask questions of the appointed institutions of the nascent country. (The Sochnut [e.e. Jewish Agency] etc.)

All efforts to obtain any direction from all the founding organisations of the nascent State met with no result at all. Many efforts were made by the Organisation of the Railway and Postal Workers to obtain terms of reference or guidance from all of them, but there was no-one with whom to speak.

It was after a series of meetings between Paicovitch, Efrati and Nissan and after various contacts, that Mr. Paicovitch, with the Council of the Haifa branch made the decision to take steps to establish the Hebrew Railways. It was clear to us that in order to take such steps it was vital for us to continue to work in the railways headquarters administration in Khoury House.

Mr. Paicovitch, as part of his position as Chief Operations Controller, had begun to store the carriages and locomotives on the tracks of Jewish settlements (Rehovot, Petach Tikva, Tel Aviv, Hadera, Binyamina, Atlit, Kiryat Motzkin and Haifa).

(Haifa, it is obvious, was a unique situation, for it was the last point of the British withdrawal.)

The number of empty tracks in Hebrew settlements (as listed above) was limited, but in spite of that Paicovitch succeeded in gathering the majority of the locomotives and rolling stock in the area which was left to the Jewish State according to the Partition Plan. (With the exception of one locomotive and two wagons that were left in Tulkarm, and similarly locos and wagons at Lod.)

Mr. Efrati was asked to organise, at the Technion in Hadar (HaCarmel), courses for locomotive drivers and firemen. Mr. Dror Allon (the son of Mr. Paicovitch) dealt with the training of traffic/operations workers, whilst on the roof of Mr. Paicovitch's house a demonstration model of a signal box and tracks was built.

On Mr. Yitzhak Nissenbaum (later Nissan) fell the task of dealing with the issues of organising an administration, this in addition to his duty for the Haganah of taking care of the security of the Jewish workers in the Mandate Railway Administration Building at Khoury House. (See below).

In consequence, Mr. Nissan started to gather at his house Rule Books, Operating Instructions and a lot of other documents that would be needed to organise and operate the Jewish Railways.

We made attempts to add to our three-strong team some Jewish representatives from the Engineering Dept. The most senior amongst them was Sando Mirsky, but it became clear that this man was not qualified for this sort of position.

It must be remembered that after the decision of the U.N. there began a period of riots and the "small war" between the Jewish and Arab inhabitants.

Haifa East station was completely in the area ruled by the Arabs; Haifa Central was still in the mixed area, but the situation in Haifa became progressively worse. Even Khoury House itself, which was on the border of the Jewish and Arab areas of settlement, was vulnerable to gunfire. More than that, after the murder of the Jewish people in the refineries there was a great worry that the Jewish clerks would stop coming to work.

Nissan, as one of the Haganah commanders in Haifa, received instructions to ensure the security of Jewish workers in Khoury House. At a meeting with Mr. Salz he received a gun and a number of fragmentation grenades, and especially three grenades hidden in a Players Cigarette box (half cigarettes and half explosives). One of the grenades was always in my pocket; I began to smoke and began to offer cigarettes every morning to the Arab guards who guarded the building. The remaining two grenades I gave to the young Jewish employees who worked in the offices.

(I also organised a signal link with the nearest Haganah post, and even moved into Beit Moushayoff, near to the administration building.)

I smuggled a gun under a plaster cast that we put on the leg of Mr. Mannheim, as though it had been broken. The gun was taken out of the cast in the toilets and given to Mr. Falk to hide between the calculators in the Accountants' Offices.

Mr. Moshe Paicovitch was a veteran amongst the Jewish employees on the Mandate Railways, and he organised the meetings with the Area Council in Haifa; he also had very good relations with the Army authorities who were in charge of directing the retreat of the British to Haifa.

He made very many efforts to arrange the transfer of locos and wagons to safe storage in Jewish areas, since without them there would have been no point to our efforts to establish a 'Hebrew Railway'.

The link between the Jewish populations in Tel Aviv and Haifa wasn't adequate, and the Jewish workers in Tel Aviv, who had initially thought about creating a centre there in Tel Aviv, did not in the end succeed in creating an coherent organisation.

Most of the Jews in the South were working in the Engineering Department - on tracks and bridges - and only a few of them were left in Lod engaged in maintaining locomotives. The town of Lod was a huge Arab centre and the station was also a very important junction for rail traffic. Tel Aviv itself was a small and modest station, and was not very significant in terms of railway traffic operations; also the length of tracks in the station was not very great.

With the worsening situation we arranged meetings of the Jewish workers in Beit HaHistadrut in Halutz Street, Haifa, and I announced to them that, according to the instructions of the authorities, they must continue working in all places possible, especially in Khoury House.

There were some who argued vehemently against me and said, "If one Jew should be killed, their blood will be on your head!" - but at the end of the day most of the workers listened and continued coming to work (sometimes crawling!) to Beit Khoury.

The work by Mr. Paicovitch of storing the wagons also made possible the placing of wagons loaded with ammunition in Jewish stations, and the Haganah was informed about this, and enriched its reserves with British ammunition.

Also in the area of information about the immigration boats approaching the country, Mr. Melzer and I gave information to the Intelligence Branch concerning the fact that the British had learned about this or that immigration boat. (Mr. Kirby, as the Manager of the Ports Authority, had by law to confiscate the boats) The information to the Railways management passed by coded telegram, the code of which we had; we took care of opening the envelopes, reading the information, and passing it to the Intelligence Branch.

Another activity was the preparation of Jewish crews to operate the locomotives and stock. The number of Jews who were loco drivers (if at all), firemen or traffic staff in the

stations was very limited, and we started training our workers in the evenings at the Technion. (Mr. Efrati organised this activity). The same applied to Traffic problems, when the model railway was built on the roof of Mr. Paicovitch's house on Hadar Carmel, with the help of the Jewish workers Zvi Greenbaum (Rimmon) and Asher Roth, who worked at the Signalling Dept.

In addition Mr. Paicovitch arranged with 'Solel Boneh' that a number of Jewish workers, who were employed "as though" on works on behalf of the British Army, trained in Kiryat Motzkin in operating steam engines, moving wagons and coupling them.

Nissan was concentrating on preparing Rule Books, procedures etc., which he quietly took out from Khoury House and gathered in his house; he also made a list of Jewish workers in the key positions - see Table A.

Nissan had discussions with Mr. Beliavsky and Mr. Azrieli, Chief Accountants of the Mandate Government, in order to ensure that we would have the data and also names of Jewish companies which owed money to the Mandate Railway, so that that it might be possible to collect it; this would be a small source of money towards the beginning of operations.

It was clear to us that without a strong connection to the British Army, and even providing a service to them, that it would be very difficult for us to take over the property that was in the hands of Palestine Railways (Eretz Yisrael).

Paicovitch had discussions with the Army and it was hinted to Kirby that the Jews would operate the Hebrew Railways. The reaction of the British (railway) officers or the Army officers was "You won't be able to move even one loco one metre!"

The British Government and the Palestine Railways.

The British filled all the important posts on the Mandate Railways. The workers on the 2nd. level were Jews and Arabs (mostly Arabs), and at the lowest level the majority were Arabs.

In the Railways Administration there was a change after the appointment of Kirby as the General Manager of both the Railways and Ports. In contrast to the example set by his predecessors, who saw the railway as a transport service mainly for the British Army, he saw the railway also as providing a civilian and commercial service, and he worked hard for this aim.

Of course during the period of the Second World War he gave all his efforts and initiative to the Army's needs, but near to the end of the war he commenced laying his plans for a commercial railway serving the public.

In addition to 'Appendix B', the structure of the railway as he prepared it in 1946, he travelled to and developed contacts with neighbouring railway managers in order to secure

additional communication with Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

In contrast to the senior management officers in the British Government in Eretz Yisrael, Kirby was interested in maintaining the complete system of the railways and in handing it over as a well-oiled machine into the hands of those who would inherit it from the British, who were leaving the country, and not to leave complete chaos (as was the intention of the majority of the British authorities before the end of the Mandate).

It is possible that one of the motives for keeping the railway at work was to help in the evacuation of the British.

With the conquest of Haifa on 23rd. April 1948, and after the burning of Khoury House and the flight from the country of the majority of Arab workers, he took steps to ensure the maintenance of basic services for as long as possible, and to hand over the railway in the best shape possible to the Jewish railway workers.

Concerning this theme, I have to add that a very warm and even friendly relationship had developed, during their work together, between Kirby, Paicovitch and Nissenbaum. Mr. Paicovitch, because of his key position and his knowledge of Hebrew, English, French, Arabic and Turkish, escorted Mr. Kirby on his travels to the Managers of neighbouring railways.

There were also close links of friendship between Nissenbaum, Kirby and Mr. J. Norman. A farewell letter to Mr. Norman from Nissenbaum is in Appendix 3.

With the conquest of Haifa and despite the flight of the Arab workers, the Jewish employees worked together with the British Army to operate the trains.

However, as I mentioned before, their strong connections made it possible for the Jewish workers, mainly under the instructions of Mr. Paicovitch, to arrange movement of wagons with British ammunition and weapons to the stations; there it was possible during the nights for the Haganah to 'recover' the British weapons, but the fact that the railway services continued working till the last moment was another reason for Kirby's decision to give the running of the railway over to the Jewish workers.

Amongst the British who stayed in Israel was the Traffic Manager, Mr. Baker, who was married to a German lady and who had to postpone his departure from the country because of the old age of his mother-in-law. This made it possible for Kirby to hand over the running of the railway to Mr. Baker, but Baker knew, and Kirby also knew, that Mr. Paicovitch had been appointed by the Jewish Provisional Government Council to be the Manager of the Hebrew Railways, and that the moment the British left the country (15th. May 1948) the General Management would be given automatically into Paicovitch's hands.

Close to the evacuation, Mr. Kirby called upon Mr. Nissenbaum and in open conversation told him that he had full

confidence in him and he would appoint him to the Management of the Stores and Supplies Dept. (He said, "They'll not steal a locomotive, but they could well rob the storerooms and there are a lot of expensive goods in them, and I want to give these into faithful hands.")

On 26th. April 1948, that is to say, after the occupation of Haifa, Mr. Kirby gave the instructions to transfer the railway to the Jews, and on the 10th. May 1948 he issued his last Memorandum as General Manager of Palestine Railways; in it he announced the temporary appointments of Jews to run the railways.

A copy of this Memo forms Appendix D.

The Operation of the Hebrew Railways.

On 15th. May 1948 the management of the railways passed officially into the hands of the Jews, and there was established, de facto, the Hebrew Railways.

Mr. Paicovitch invited me to come back to him to the railway Administration from the Stores Management to act as his own Personal Assistant, in order to organise the administration of the railway, and I appointed Mr. Shermak for a short while to be Manager of the Stores Department, until the appointment of Mr. Verlinsky to this position.

We had to face many problems, amongst them:-

a). Conscription of youngsters.

The Jewish security authorities issued orders to call up all young Jewish men to "Tzahal". It was clear to us that we had to make sure of a minimum of experienced workers, because otherwise we should not be able to run any operations.

Paicovitch had begun negotiations with the Provisional Council and a minimum of Jewish men was called up, and joined to a work unit that was established under the authority of Yosef Almogi. This unit was manned in the main with men from the Posts and Telegraphs, and men from the Railway. The unit fought at night, helping to occupy all the Arab villages around Haifa, whilst in the daytime they didn't fight, but instead most of them were released in order to ensure that work continued smoothly on the railway, posts and telegraph.

At the head of the Postal section was Arye Gurel, then as now the Mayor of Haifa, and the head of the railway section was Nissan.

b). Sending teams of workers to Cyprus.

The British requested that a number of workers be sent to Cyprus, to prepare the final accounts etc. of the employees, and we, the Jewish workers, were interested in doing this in order to secure the rights of the Jewish workers who stayed in the country.

After meeting with the Provisional Council in Haifa, a small number of workers went to Cyprus (Mr. Norman invited me to go with them to Cyprus and to head the Office, but I

declined his offer.) Among those who went were Mr. Lehrer, Gottlieb, Baker etc.

c). Conscription of Workers.

In order to operate the service, it was vital that workers be called up to carry out the duties that had been left vacant by the Arab workers. This was especially the case in the Traffic, Engineering and Mechanical Departments. Nissan, and after him Dror Allon, worked hard at classifying workers, especially men who were no longer young, and also those left over from the Army call-up (also not so young), and to place them in the railway service.

d). Classification and Transfer of Workers.

A significant proportion of the Jewish employees, especially the women, were not manual workers. Nissan accordingly made efforts to send those workers who were physically fit to work in the Traffic Department, whilst the women workers and the remainder were sent to the various other departments that were beginning to be organised under the leadership of the senior Jewish employees there, who took upon themselves the management of those departments.

e). Training.

We established a modest school for training workers, to give them the basic knowledge of railway operation; the tutors were Jewish veterans of the Mandate period. Mr. Zeira was appointed as the head of the school, which was held in a building at the Haifa Central Railway Station.

Here I must point out that there was not even one Jewish worker in the Permanent Way Department, and a great deal of assistance to those allocated to this section was given by Mr. Asher Roth, who knew something about this sort of work. Later on, after the occupation of Lod, the Engineering Department workers in the south played the main role in training the Permanent-Way workers.

f). Accommodation.

In order to operate the railways we called upon Jewish workers from Tel Aviv to move into Haifa; for this purpose we rented several floors in a building at Rehov Melachim 55, and at the same time fitted them out as temporary accommodation.

g). Watches.

In order to maintain the timetable and punctuality we had to supply the engine drivers with watches. It was necessary to purchase identical watches, and Nissan succeeded in buying fifty watches that had been confiscated at the time by the Customs Authorities, and gave them to the engine drivers; all the watches were engraved with the letters "R.I." ("Rakevet Israel"), and the number of the watch.

h). The First Movements.

The first civilian traffic movements were the operation of passenger trains between Haifa and Kiryat Motzkin and also to Hadera. This had already commenced in June 1948, and the first timetable of the railway was published to announce these.



Entrance to the Main Railway Offices at Haifa East, September 1948.
(Photo: Israel Govt. Press Office, ref. K (Kluger) 3339, File K31.)
Who is the fellow looking so clearly and proudly in charge ?

i). Co-ordination with the Army.

It was necessary to liaise continuously with Tzahal, who appointed Mr. Nelkin (an employee of the Defence Ministry) to liaise with the Traffic Department concerning operations. Matters included the need to transport heavy freight items (tanks) and also to operate armoured trollies for defence - especially near Tulkarm.

j). Money and Budgets.

A difficult problem was the transfer of money to pay the weekly salaries after we had commenced work. Here we were helped by being able to use the money that the Accounts Department under Mr. Beliavsky and Mr. Azrieli had succeeded in collecting from Jewish companies that had owed it to the Mandatory railway. By the end of June salaries were already paid through the Transport Ministry.

The first budget, prepared by Nisan, was presented to the Transport Ministry at the first meeting with Mr. Lifschitz, who had been appointed by Minister Remez (the first Minister of Transport) to head the Inland Transport Section.

k). Furniture and Office Arrangements.

After Khoury House had been burned down with the occupation of Haifa on 23rd. April 1948, the administration of the Mandate Railways was moved into Haifa Central Station. This place was not really suitable for observing the workers or for work to be carried out, so the clerks (male and female) rolled up their sleeves and became porters and cleaners, and took from the ruined Khoury House everything they could still use. This was evidence of the strong will of the workers to help in operating a Hebrew Railway.

l). Operations.

With the occupation of Lod the Engineering Department made efforts to build a line by-passing Tulkarm, and this made possible for us a direct railway link with Lod and Petach Tikva, enabling the transfer of engines, wagons etc. that had been in storage in Petach Tikva, Rehovot etc. and driving them to the workshops in Haifa in order to make them fit once again for regular traffic.

In this way regular rail traffic from Haifa to Tel Aviv and later to Jerusalem was begun.

m). The Occupation of Lod.

With the conquest of Lod and the flight of the Arabs from the town, Weillichman and Berkovitz had to check the situation in Lod, the collection of wagons and engines and the rest of the railway property. Mr. Seiffer was appointed as head of the engine shed at Lod, and he made great efforts to reconstruct the depot installations and make it operational.

Mr. Levanoni dealt with the equipment of the Engineering Department - the rails, sleepers etc.

In conclusion, I want to emphasise the very special and vital role, the intense efforts and devotion to duty (beyond their regular hours of service) of the Jewish workers in the Mandate Government; without them the Israeli Railway would not have been able to work even before the establishment of the State, and certainly not providing a service to the country in its earliest days.

Factual details concerning the operation of the Hebrew Railways in its first year I have laid out in a special Memorandum which we handed, over the signature of Mr. Paicovitch, the first General Manager of the Railway, to the Transport Minister in the beginning of 1949.

I cannot finish without recalling the resignation - or the dismissal - of Mr. Moshe Paicovitch, which remains an enigma until today.

As far as I know, Mr. Levy (who worked in Mr. Paicovitch's office) sent the correspondence to the very senior Messrs. Rimmon and Nimmes, and Nimmes sent it to the newspapers. The Transport Minister, Mr. Dov Joseph, blamed Mr. Paicovitch as though he had passed this correspondence to the newspapers, though this was not true, and there was no justification for his dismissal on the grounds that he had leaked this information to the Press.

Table A.

Names of Jewish Workers in Key Positions in the Mandate Railway.

(These are names of the Jewish workers, insofar as I can recall them, that I collected at the time in case one day there would ever be a Hebrew Railway. The full list remains in the Railway offices, and there is no doubt that I have not recalled the whole list.)

Traffic Dept.

M. Paicovitch.
Y. Allon. [NB: should this be D. Allon ?]
Y. Hardy. (An Englishman, who converted to Judaism).
G. Hardy. (son of above).
A. Milshtein.
Elbagly (or Albegly ?)
Elbagly (") (son).
Levy. (Motzkin Station).
Shapira. (Atlit station)
Akrish. (Zichron Yaakov Station).
Malka. (Binyamina Station)
Trop. (Hadera Station).
Yulichman. (Petach Tikva Station).
Berkovitz. (Tel Aviv Station).
Kossover. (Rehovot Station).
Sabah. (Haifa Port).

Signals and Telephones Dept.

Z. Greenboim. (Rimmon).
A. Roth.

Mechanical Dept.

Sokolovitch. (Efrati).
Sh. Steinberg.
Gissman.
Rabinovitch.
Lifshitz.
Krisher.
Zonderman.
Seiffer.
Seiffer (son of the Depot Manager; an engine driver).
Livni.
Stampel.

Engineering Dept.

Taktz.
Sandobosky.
Golan.
Bukshtein.
Nachmani.
Zemirin.
Levanoni.
Lifkin.

Headquarters Administration.

Lehrer.
Nissan.
Hankin.
M. Melzer.
Gottlieb - Personnel.
Baker - Personnel.
Baum. (Later transferred to Traffic Dept.)
Levy.

Accounts Dept.

Beliavsky.
Azrieli.
Wincour.
Bacher.
Elkiyim.

[Note: The remaining Appendices referred to in the text are omitted for now, for reasons of space. Ed.]

28:18.

ISRAEL STATE ARCHIVES. PART 3.

This is a rough list of what is to be found on Microfilm No. G 93/108; few of the "R/..." references were noted, and only some of the four-digit microfilm starting frame numbers:

- 371/14. (0005-) Proposed Night Train Service from Pal. to Egypt. 1935.
371/15. (0053-) Rly. rates for carriage of cereals.
371/16. () Lease by Spinneys of HR Goods Shed at Acre.
371/17. (R/29/34). Water Supply at Haifa, Beisan, Lydda.
371/18. () Conditions of Service for Wages Grades, PR. 1934-41.
371/19. () Revision of General Manager's Powers.
371/20. (0934-) -do-
371/21. (0949-) Orange Inspection Sheds at rly. stations.
371/22. (0975-) Washout on Pal. Rlys. 1947.
371/23. (0980-) Proposed Deviation of a length of the HR in the East of Haifa, 1935-38.
371/24. () Proposed purchase of breakdown crane. 1935-9.
371/25. (1075-) Railway layout in Haifa Harbour area.
371/26. (1125-) Auditor's Report, 1934/35.
371/27. (1193-) Water supply at Lydda. 1936.
371/28. (1337-) Local purchase, Pal. Rlys. Dept., 1937.
371/29. () Hire of CFH 3rd. class passenger carriages.
371/30. (1391-) Land for rly extension at Ard er Ramle, Haifa.
371/31. (1441-) Accommodation for the Asst. Auditor in the railway. offices at Haifa.

372/1. (1451-) Write-off, PR. 1936. (incl. 5 old wagons).
372/2. (1489-) Compensation for delay to Rly. traffic.
372/3. (1505-) Water supply to railway staff at Lydda.
372/4. (1521-) Charges for construction of private sidings.
372/5. (1538-) Rly. rates for traffic diverted from Jaffa to Haifa in connection with the Disturbances of 1936.

372/6. (1616-) Purchase of Biassi sleepers, 1940.
372/7. (1731-) Contract for Offloading & Stacking of Coal at stations.

372/8. (1760-) Proposed Tel Aviv Siding Improvement.
372/9. (1856-) Proposed rly. improvements, Tel Aviv, 1946.
372/10. (1862-) Loss of Cash at Railway Stations.
372/11. (1897-) Nomenclature of Transport Officer, PR, 1936.
372/12. (1902-) Emergency Expenditure by Railways.
372/13. (1915-) Machinery for Mechanical Workshops.
372/14. (1932-) Proposed new Railway Offices at Haifa.
372/15. (2024-) Loss of Jerusalem Stn. Cash bag on 28/11/35. And Instructions on Control of Trains.

372/16. (2126-) Erection of gates at rly. level crossings.
372/17. (2198-) Rates for transport of Cereals.
372/18. (2243-) Programme of Work re. Audit incl. 1942-47.
372/19. (2300-) Progress of work.
372/20. (2310-) Official Holidays.
372/21. (2322-) Public telephones at railway stations.

- 372/22. (2357-) Contribution by P.R. to the roads in Tel Aviv.
 372/23. (2388-) Refund of overcharges by PR., 1942/3.
 372/24. (2401-) Spray Painting Shed at HR Works, Haifa.
 372/25. (2449-) Settlement of account with CFH, 1941.
 372/27. (2604-) Simplon-Orient Express Traffic.

- 372/28. (2617-) R/1/38. Transport of Oranges.
 372/29. (2639-) R/2/38. Transport of Scrap Iron from Tel Aviv to Haifa.
 372/30. (2644-) R/3/38. Transport of materials for P.E.C. from Haifa to Tel Aviv.
 372/31. (2648-) R/4/38. Selim Matalon v. General Manager, Rlys. (*)
 372/32. () R/5/38. Damage to armoured military rail trolley.
 372/33. (2653-) R/6/38. Rly. sleepers destroyed by fire or missing.

End of this film.

28.19.

MODELLING NOTES.

a). The Israel Model Railway Club at Kibbutz Netzer Sereni is making good progress on its layout(s); according to Uri Ben-Rehav, by December '94 the turntable has been installed; member Yossi Talischevski has scratch-built a 6-road loco shed with doors closed automatically by the locos. Märklin trains are chasing around the AC part of the layout, the DC section is nearly finished, and the landscapers and electronic-wizards are busy. There has been some talk of a layout being constructed for the Haifa museum at one time, though the club is too busy at present.

b). The British HO Society is getting off the ground; it has now formally changed its name to the "British 1:87 Scale Society" and produces a neat newsletter called 'Satellite'. They hope to produce a range of British-outline models in 1:87 scale or 3.5mm to the foot (the standard European scale, as opposed to the traditional British 4mm to the foot), and these would include items of interest to Middle East modellers - e.g. 8F 2-8-0's, GCR (ROD) 04 2-8-0's.

For details contact David Armitage, at 6, Namu Road, Bournemouth, BH9 2QU.

c). Mr. P. J. Scrivens, a driver on Network South-East e.m.u.'s, is keen to model Israel Railways and seeks information with a regular correspondent on colour schemes etc. Anyone interested - please contact him at 36, Jail Lane, Biggin Hill, Kent TN16 3SA.

28.20.

WRECKING A WRECK.

Further to items in 22:17, 23:6(d) and 23:22 I have received from R.A. Bowen a copy of a page (p.55) from an unidentified and undated magazine - probably 'Diver' - with an article by John Bantin about the 'Thistlegorm' wreck in which several 8F 2-8-0's and wagons lie; it raises fascinating issues of the ethics of exploration and preservation.

"Following her discovery by Jacques Cousteau in the mid-1950's, the wreck of the WWII British armed merchantman "Thistlegorm" lay forgotten, close to the popular Red Sea dive sites of the southern Sinai, for more than 30 years. Then, in November 1992, the news of her rediscovery exploded among the dive-boat operators in Israel and Egypt.

I was privileged to be one of the first modern-day divers to visit what was immediately acknowledged as one of the world's classic wreck sites, and my experiences were recounted in the May 1993 issue of DIVER.

But when I returned to the 'Thistlegorm' a few months after my first visit, I was shocked to witness the results of the diver activity which had already taken place.

'Thistlegorm' is a time-capsule, a vast monument to both the industry and the waste of war. She's a giant underwater car-park, jammed full of trucks, light vehicles, motorcycles, and Bren-gun carriers. The decks are lashed with railway wagons; the holds packed tight with guns and ammunition.

But the philosophy of "Take only photographs - leave only bubbles" is not subscribed to here. The souvenir hunters have already started their vandalism.

It was sad, if not entirely unexpected, to see motorbike tank-filler caps missing, truck windshields broken where wipers were wrestled off, toolkits missing, and copper plumbing wrenched from bulkheads. The galley was stripped. Graffiti was scrawled on the bonnets of trucks and on the side-walls of massive tyres.

.....

The bulk of the 'Thistlegorm's' cargo still remains intact only because, quite frankly, there's so much down there. But I'm told that the crew of one Italian boat raised two motorcycles and took them to Italy where they were encased in resin and sold for a handsome profit. Bundles of rifles have also been brought up, together with an endless assortment of other items which, left where they lay, were magic mementoes of a previous time. Exposed to the air, they deteriorate before one's very eyes to become useless junk....."

Managed properly, the 'Thistlegorm' site could have been another Truk lagoon. Unfortunately, the destruction continues uncontrolled."

Israel has a new railway ! It's only a kilometre or so long, operates but occasionally and without benefit of timetabled movements, and is a mere 60cms wide between railheads, but it's a brand new, bona fide railway nonetheless. And it's not every day you can report on such a thing in Israel.

The line in question, known as the Rakevet Ha'Alonim (The Oaks Railway), is at Kibbutz En Shemer near Hadera. The layout is a simple L shape, running around two sides of the kibbutz perimeter. At either end is a station, remarkably well-equipped with a raised concrete platform, wooden roof, and a short siding. At the end of this siding is a tiny turntable for turning the loco. Neither station was named at the time of my visits, so I shall refer to them as Upper and Lower which at least reflects their topographical relationship. The end of track at Upper Terminal is covered over to provide protection and stabling for the train. There are no dedicated workshop facilities; presumably minor repairs will be carried out in the kibbutz garage.

The loco on the Oaks Railway is Ruston & Hornsby 4-wheel diesel 432660. This had been built in 1959 and was delivered to the Israel Salt Company at Atlit. Ruston 432660 was acquired by Kibbutz Ain Harod (Meuhad) about 1970, after the salt railway at Atlit had closed. The intention was to use it on a short length of track at Ain Harod and to give rides to children, but it seems not to have seen any use there and it was laid aside for many years. By 1994 it had gone to En Shemer. (Another Ruston diesel from the Israel Salt Co. at Atlit also went to Kibbutz Ain Harod where it saw infrequent service hauling children. It is still there and may work again if track is relaid.)

Ruston 432660 was given an extensive facelift at En Shemer, being fitted with a dummy smokebox and enormous chimney. This latter fitting is not a dummy as the exhaust is piped through it. The loco's engine had been overhauled by a firm called Schmerling somewhere in the Tel Aviv area. 432660 is painted, very smartly, in British Racing Green. Its Ruston & Hornsby worksplate has gone missing, but it still carries a plate of the agents Siniaver & Sugarman of Jaffa, who acted as intermediaries when the loco was first purchased by the Israel Salt Co. This plate is in English, Hebrew and Arabic.

There are four coaches on The Oaks Railway and they appear to be scratch-built from whatever components could be found or manufactured. Unusual, too, is the track. The rails are ex-Israel Railways and of standard gauge profile. The steel sleepers are like none I can recall seeing before,

being square-ended and possibly cut to length from continuous steel strip. It is known that track materials arrived on the daily IR trip working from Binyamina to Hadera East, where they were unloaded for onward conveyance to En Shemer by road.

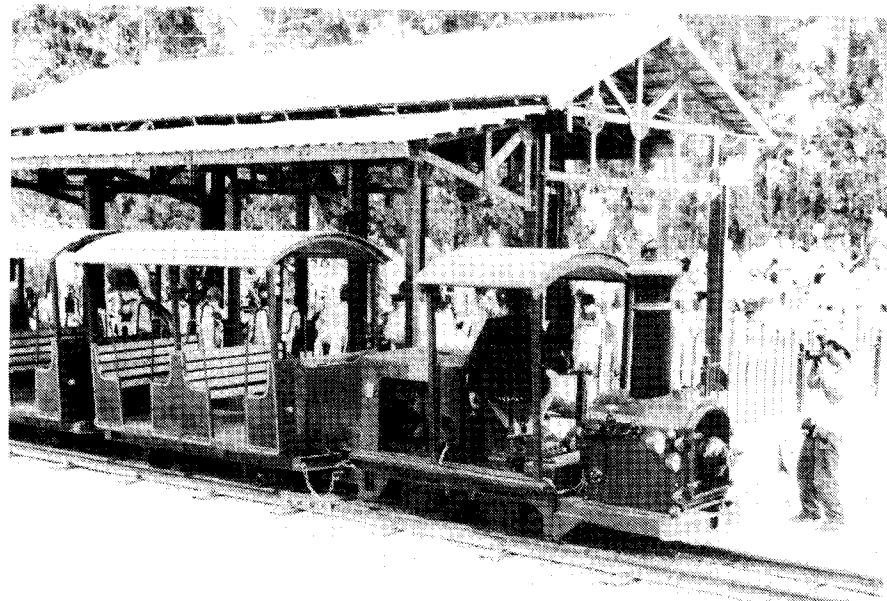
The Oaks Railway was officially opened with all due ceremony in the afternoon of 25th. September 1994 during the holiday of Sukkot. A band entertained guests at the Upper station. Practically all the kibbutzniks and half the surrounding countryside turned out to witness the arrival of the opening special train. Cameras clicked and whirred. Speeches were made, including one by the then-IR General Manager, Ya'akov Shen-Tzur. Ruston 432660 backed its train out of the station past the single point, uncoupled and ran onto the turntable at the end of the siding. While the loco was turned, eager young hands pushed the coaches back into the station and 432660 coupled up again. Eventually, as dusk descended, we drifted away.

Two weeks later Ruston 432660 and its train were under cover at the Upper station, not having seen any use since opening day. A license was still required for further operation and, anyway, Ran Hedvati (the mastermind behind The Oaks Railway) was going to be far too busy for the next couple of months getting in the cotton crop to spare time for his pet projects.

Kibbutz En Shemer also boasts a most interesting museum called 'The Old Courtyard', devoted mainly to pioneer Jewish settlement days and reminiscent of similar establishments to be found throughout North America. There is a fine display of ancient artefacts from archaeological digs as well, but it is the exhibition of old agricultural implements which will probably engage the attention of readers of this magazine; alongside several vintage farm tractors is a 'locomobile', a portable steam engine hooked up to what might be a machine for separating cotton. The 'locomobile' could not be identified, and its history is obscured by legend and folklore rather than illuminated by facts, but its mere presence will gladden the hearts of lovers of all things steam-powered.

[In an article in "Industrial Railway Record" No. 138, p.357, Paul adds further information on operations on the Atlit Salt Railway in the 1950's, when there were three locos, with two trains in use at any one time - one bringing up loaded tip wagons from the salt pans, the other taking empties back.]

Ruston 432660 after arrival at the Upper station of the Oaks Railway with the Opening Special on 25th. September 1994. (Paul Cotterell).



28.22.

THE FATE OF JERUSALEM.

Mrs. Doreen Walden of Newcastle served in the A.T.S. Palestine 1946-48, the larger part of this time in Jerusalem. She writes:

"In the summer of 1946 I travelled from Cairo to Jerusalem (to where I had been posted), travelling on the old Palestine Railway across the Sinai via Kantara, where we stopped in the middle of the night for refreshment. The journey took about 30 hours. I remained in Palestine until the evacuation of British forces in 1948 when the mandate ended.

I think it was early in 1947 when the railway station in Jerusalem was blown up, and thereafter not used. Troop movements by rail were then based on Lydda, and it was from here that we left Palestine in 1948, again crossing the Sinai to Egypt."

[This is interesting: Did Jerusalem line services recommence after this explosion? Although the station building had been damaged, this shouldn't have prevented troop trains and freights from using the line - unless it was considered to be simply too unsafe strategically. Does anyone know when the last PR train left Jerusalem? Ed.]

28.23.

THE QATANA CAMP RAILWAY

Bill Atkin of Kendal has sent some memories of construction in the Middle East:

"I was sent from 193 Railway Operating Company R.E. at Beirut to Qatana, some dozen kilometres south-west of Damascus, for about three weeks in August-September 1944; I was back in Beirut by 19th. September.

There were three systems planned, at Aartouz, Mezze and Qatana, but I can only remember working on the Qatana line. I was taken by road from Beirut to Damascus, and was delivered to the Commander, Roytal Engineers. I was still only on secondment to the RE, and the CRE nearly had a fit when he saw my Artillery badges, but I managed not to disclose that the only railways I had built were Hornby. Actually, that proved to be quite good practice for the job. I was then taken to a camp at Qatana; and it was my turn to be taken aback when I saw the contract. It consisted of a few Gestetner sheets, and the only plan available was scratched with a stylus onto the stencil.

The country consisted of a series of shallow valleys with little vegetation, and much broken limestone lying on the surface. I wore through the soles of a new pair of Army boots in the three weeks. The intention was to build a series of stone camps or barracks, and the stone was to be brought from small hillside quarries. Each camp was marked out with just four corner stakes. There was no survey for the 60cm. gauge railway. The contract for the construction of the railway was let to a Damas Arab; and was to be supervised (part-time) by a civilian Clerk of Works who was a fascinating man: a Jew who had fled from Poland to Turkey, and then taken employment with the army. He spoke a formidable battery of languages. The contractor was a devious man, who did nothing he could avoid. The three of us did not have a language in common - my smattering of Egyptian Arabic was fairly useless in Syria, and the clerk of works had to translate. When he wasn't around, I just had to manage.

I began work on the Qatana line by tramping around the area to locate the quarries and the markers for the camps. And then, in the absence of a survey, I walked back and forth over each section, working out how to lay the line on the least gradient. After some days of this, I had fixed the route (in my mind); and then came the great day when I transferred the route to the ground. Firstly, I was introduced to the first bulldozer I had ever seen; and then I set off slowly to walk the line of the route, followed by the bulldozer which scored a broad scar to mark it. The bulldozer was followed by a mob of women and children with baskets. They spread out over the hillsides, gathering small stones which they dumped along the middle of the bulldozer track. Then, men came with small hammers, breaking up the stones for ballast and forming it into a track bed.

Later, lengths of Decauville track were carried out from the store, and laid end-to-end along the line. At this point, it was discovered that there were fishplates, but no bolts. And so I spent a whole day in a truck, scouring depots in Syria and Lebanon for suitable bolts. I believe we found them

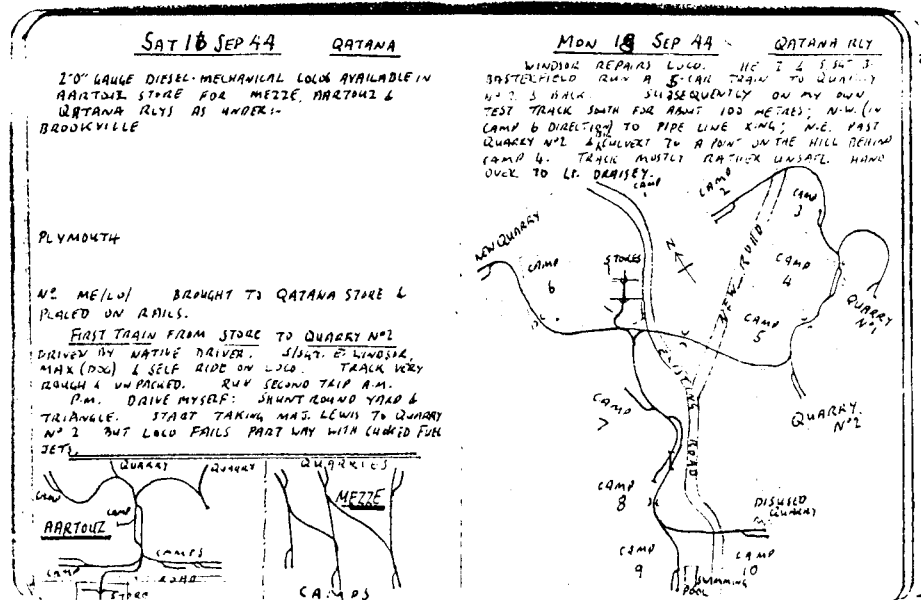
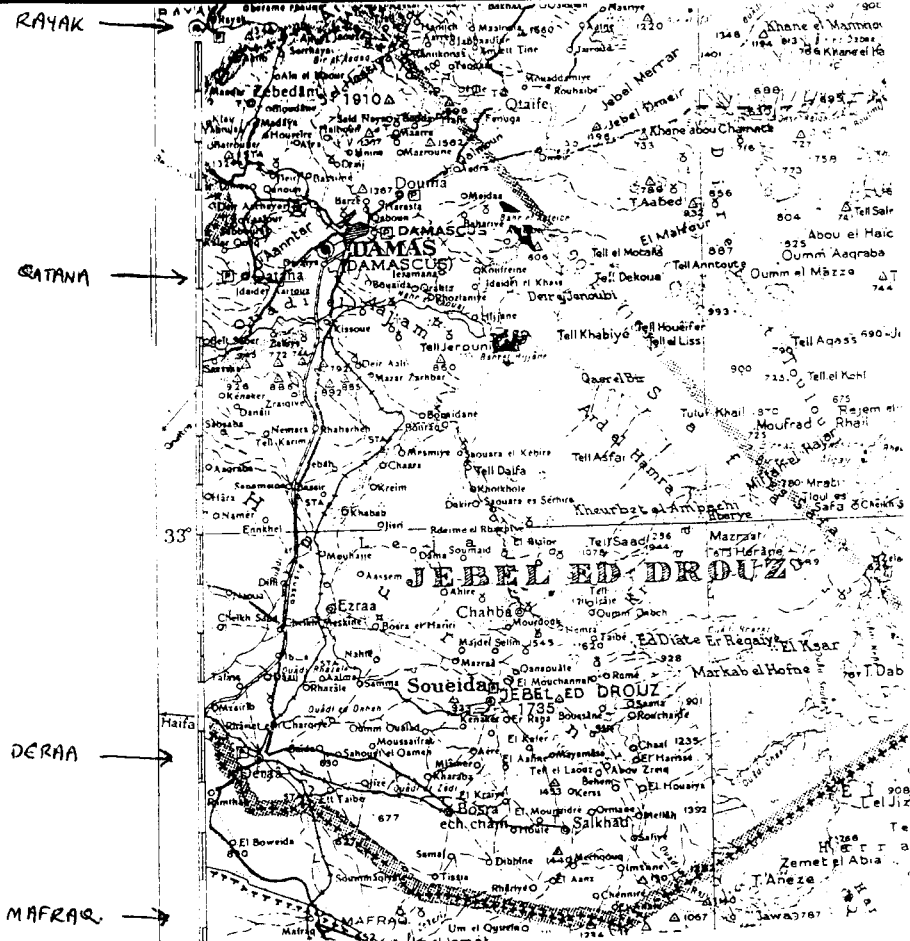
eventually in the Bekaa valley. It was a very hot day, and the drivers were Muslim, and it was Ramadan. So I was very thirsty and hungry by the time I got back to camp!

As the track-laying progressed, I was increasingly worried because there were not enough points (a familiar problem from Hornby days!) Also I could not discover how it was intended that the line should be worked, and so the provision of sidings and loops had to be a matter of guesswork. Eventually I managed to get a couple of workshop engineers to visit the site to discuss the manufacture of more turnouts. They looked at me in horror and said flatly that, as they had no planing machine, they couldn't make the switches. So I sketched a stub point, and they thought they could make those.

We had several small, four-wheeled diesel-mechanical engines; and at last came the great event when the first was driven out from Qatana store onto the new railway. Appropriately for the Middle East, the tiny engine carried four: an Arab driver, myself, S/Sgt. Windsor and Max (his dog). My notes record track as very rough and unpacked. Later, I drove the engine myself, and have a vivid memory of the way each length of track sank as the engine wheels came on to it, and I could see the far end rise; then, as we passed the point of balance, the rails tipped in the opposite direction.

On Monday 18th. September 1944 we hauled 5 tip wagons from Qatana store to Quarry 2 and back, and then I tested more new track towards Camp 6. In the afternoon, I handed over to the lieutenant in charge of the site and set off by road for Beirut, having been urgently recalled to Cairo. So, I never saw the railway finished, and I never discovered what sort of job RE workshops made of these stub points. I very much doubt, though, whether those camps were ever finished either, as the Middle East army was already being severely cut back. Or - has it become a Syrian Army base?"

In pages from his Diary Bill had noted that the locos were of Brookville and Plymouth build, obtained from the Aartouz store. After the notable first trip he drove the loco himself on a second run, "shunting round the yard and triangle, started taking Major Lewis to Quarry 2 but the loco failed part-way with a choked fuel jet"; on Monday 18/9/44 Windsor repaired the loco; "He, I and S/Sgt. Basterfield ran a 5-car train to Quarry 2 and back. Subsequently on my own test track south for about 100 metres; N.W. (in Camp 6 direction) to Pipe line crossing; N.E. past Quarry No. 2 & big culvert to a point on the hill behind Camp 4. Track mostly rather unsafe. Hand over to Lt. Draisey."



THE HEDJAZ RAILWAY REBUILDING.

From Mr. E. Ingerslev, now living in Tenerife, I have received some fascinating 'inside details' of the abortive scheme to rebuild the Hedjaz Railway in the 1960's. This received a lot of press coverage at the time, but then everything went quiet....

The scheme was to reconstruct the 840km. from Maan in Jordan to Medina in Saudi Arabia. "This was tendered for in the usual way with a Bill of Quantities which I priced and my partner negotiated. Nearly 2,000 bridges and the embankment were completed and paid for in the usual way. The rails and sleepers were subject to 20 years credit, to be guaranteed by the three Governments within 30 days of the signing of the contract. This they were not able to do for 300 days, pledging harvests and taxes to the American banks. This meant that we could not use the reconstructed railway to transport materials etc; we put in a claim for the losses we thus incurred, and they retaliated by stopping all payments due to us. We consulted lawyers, and were prepared to take the case to The Hague; We were advised we would win but there was no guarantee we would get any money ! So we gave in, and completed the works but not the track. Then the Israel-Arab war came along, and we sold all but 1/3% of the shares in the Company we had created for the construction in 1962-65."

In a later letter came the following further memoirs:

"We tendered our offer to the Committee for the three Arab countries, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, as a Joint Venture with ourselves and Martin Cowley Ltd.; we formed a Company, Alderton Westminster Ltd. for the purpose. I was the Venture's Representative to the Committee, and Martin Cowley found an American with railway experience to lead the construction. He sent some four or five excellent men from around the world, but he himself took ill and later died, so I took over not only the redesign of the railway but also the leading of the construction. Here we had great help from an experienced Jordanian contractor, Haidar Shoukri, with local knowledge of labour and materials.

An early job was to go down the line to see what it really looked like. We were delayed some three days because of snow, but eventually we got off. I was extremely cold overnight in our tents and not much better during the daytime in the unheated Landrovers. We came to an escarpment with no way down except the old narrow-gauge railway line, almost vertical down one side and vertical up the other side, so I took the Landrover onto the track and slowly, going bump, bump over the sleepers, got safely down ! There are, naturally, no roads in the 840 km. of desert !

As we came south and lower the temperature became quite pleasant. When we had come as far as we intended, we camped, but not before finding a salt flat; having consolidated a soft spot in the middle by driving the Landrovers over and over it, we laid out a dotted line with cheap red cloth we had brought for the purpose, and thus had a landing strip for our light aeroplane to land on next morning to take me back.

An early job was to dismantle and classify the old track, some unuseable, some useful only for sidings, but the rest could be reused. Where salty sand had covered the rails they could be completely gone, but mostly they were as freshly black with sharp edges as straight from the mills 50 years before, and the bolts could be unscrewed by hand ! This dismantling was done by a small team sitting on their behinds unscrewing the bolts holding the rails to the sleepers, then moving on two feet to the next sleeper and so on, on their bottoms for 840 kms. Surveying was started by surveyors from the UK, but after a while was taken over by local people, who were excellent. Bridges had to be rebuilt; these were mostly stone arch bridges with some 6 m. spans, the stones found locally in the desert. I made a standard drawing for this with tables, so that when the inspecting engineer had measured the span between the existing piers he could add all the other necessary dimensions. Other bridges further south were often just culverts with 1 m. or 2 m. spans, but many of them, constructed in concrete, used very low design stresses, as local sand and stone of whatever quality had had to be used. As many as 2,000 bridges were needed, from 1m. to 300 m; although there may be many years between rains, when they do come there is no vegetation to stop or delay the flow from the surrounding mountains.

The earthworks were made with modern mechanical earthmoving plant. Work started in the North, but was soon followed by working from Medina. Within the town limits of course only our Moslem staff could go; fortunately the airport was outside, so we had to drive around the town limits in the desert to reach our line. Once our Landrover failed to meet me, so I took a taxi 40 km. up through the desert ! Once at the time of the Haj I sat with the Manager of the airport, the whole concourse full of pilgrims. No-one knew what planes were coming until they landed, and it was a question then of where the most people wanted to go, that's where they went !

We had two small planes: a Beaver, slow but capable of taking heavy loads of supplies, spares and food; and a quicker Cessna for personal transport. Staff would work three weeks non-stop and then have a week off by the Mediterranean south of Beirut.

The desert, like the sea, can be very beautiful - but like the sea it has its dangers. Once an American journalist asked to go down the line to take pictures, and as I had an engineer about to travel south by Landrover, he was allowed to go with it. At one spot in Saudi Arabia he stopped to take pictures, but fell down dead ! Sunstroke, perhaps.

Apart from the tragedy, it was awkward for the poor engineer to find himself suddenly with a corpse in Saudi Arabia ! Fortunately he had, as usual, an Arab desert Policeman with him. They tried to leave him at Tebuk, where there is a large military camp, but nothing doing. So they drove North, lost their way during the night, but eventually came across the Jordanian border, where we had a working camp which could radio-telephone Amman for our plane to come and collect the dead man. That was not the end of the problems. We learned that the dead man's wife was in Beirut, so the other plane went to get her at the same time. No Minister of his faith could be found for that day, but buried he had to be !

BY TRAIN AND TAXI TO JERUSALEM. By Jeremy Wiseman.

On a visit to Tebuk I was once met by the local Sheikh, and as a gesture I took him up for a short flight in the plane. As a return friendly gesture he invited me to a beheading - I was "unfortunately" too busy that day!

My design work included not only the bridges but also the improvement of the curves on the line, which were too sharp for modern requirements.

All meetings with the Committee from the three countries were of course held in Arabic. I had here great help from a Syrian, Mr. Yellad, former Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, who acted as my advocate. I discussed the points of the coming meeting in advance, so he could speak for me, but I had to follow the discussion and intervene when necessary.

It taught me a lot about diplomacy, dealing with the three so very different nations: the very leftist Syria, the moderate Jordan and the feudal Saudi. Once I was called to a meeting which the Chairman from one country should have chaired, but he was ill; Was it another from his country or the Chairman from one of the other two who should chair? It took them a week to resolve it. Another time a Syrian engineer wished to visit the works in Saudi, but the Saudi chairman - a former Ambassador to London - said, "If I see him in Saudi, I will personally shoot him!" - words literally meant.

Basically I got on very well with them. Yellad's friend Munib Asha was very helpful in many ways. Once he took me on a trip to Krak de Chevalier in northern Syria and to a small island in the Mediterranean where they built traditional boats. On the way we stopped in Homs and had tea with his friend Assad, who later became President - and still is.

It was interesting to see in a siding a long row of the old locomotives, and half-way to Medina was still an old repair shop for locomotives, some still there half-complete. At stations old trains were still standing after 50 years - no-one blew the whistle! All intact, except for the woodwork. Along the line would also be the locomotives, lying on their sides, as blasted by Lawrence of Arabia.

I had been in Arabia from 1962, visiting my family and business in England for a few days every five or six weeks, and in Arabia sleeping often only two nights in the same bed, since my office was in Amman, Jordan, the Committee sat in Damascus and most of my work was in Saudi Arabia! In 1964 during a holiday in the UK I developed Hepatitis, which I must have caught in Arabia; I ended up for a month in hospital. From then on others took over my job until the following year, when we sold our shares to the government due to the coming war with Israel. Apart from one or two visits, I have not been back. I believe that the embankments and bridges are basically finished, but the tracklaying, always intended to be done by a specialised firm, I suspect has not been touched.

It was a fascinating area, not only the beautiful desert but places such as Mount Nebo, where Moses looked onto the Promised Land, with marvellous enormous Roman mosaics, and where, after rain, the desert was suddenly full of beautiful flowers. Or Jerash in northern Jordan, near the border to Syria; a Roman town with arches, streets with colonnades, baths, theatres, corner shops, sewers etc. - and so much more."

This article appeared in an English-language Swedish magazine, published by Frank Stenvall in Malmö, called "Railway Scene", Vol. 3, No. 2, June 1970, pp.39-42; A copy has been sent by Finn Hørsted; it is unusual in giving a "pre-enthusiast tour" view of the Hedjaz system.

"In March 1967 it was still possible to travel overland from Beirut to Jerusalem without touching Israel, and the following is an account of such a journey, a large proportion being covered by rail. The first stage, as far as Damascus, is best done by collective taxi since there is now no through rail passenger service; freight trains are run, however, and new rails for the Hedjaz railway re-construction were being conveyed by this route.

Damascus has an imposing but rather down-at-heel station in the form of a terminus. The Amman line runs South with the Beirut line branching off immediately to the West. Local passenger trains run some of the way to the Lebanese frontier, hauled by Swiss-built 2-6-0T's and 0-6-2T's. The Syrian section of the line to the South has two daily services; one is a steam-hauled mixed train and the other is provided by a vintage De Dion railcar with a leading bogie and a single axle at the rear. The bodywork is of angular appearance with vertical teak boards.

Twice a week an international train runs with through coaches to Amman, and I duly arrived at Damascus station early one morning in good time to catch it. In charge was 2-8-0 No. 90 which according to the driver was built by Jung with a boiler by Henschel (I would have thought the opposite to be more likely). Also at the station was 2-8-2 No. 263 (Hart. 4032 of 1918), with smaller driving wheels, which was assigned to the heavier mixed train due to depart fifteen minutes later. Both these locomotives were impeccably turned out in green with red frames and wheels.

The international status of my train was marred by the presence of some four-wheeled vans in the consist, but was enhanced by the fact that all customs formalities were conducted on board; soon after departure my passport was collected by Syrian officials and I hardly saw it again until the journey's end at Amman. The first item of interest seen from the train was the main locomotive shed and workshops, located in the southern suburbs of Damascus. The line then traverses an irrigated plain before crossing a low watershed, and after further gentle ups and downs comes to a dry plain with rocky soil. We ran through several stations non-stop, and at one of the places where we did stop crossed the De Dion autorail. We arrived on time at Deraa, the last Syrian station, but the scheduled wait of 25 minutes was stretched to one hour. This delay was not unwelcome, since there were several active engines to be observed. The vans were taken off my train and the Syrian 2-8-0 was replaced by a Jordanian Pacific, believed to be built in Japan, and oil-fired like all the locomotives seen on the trip. Deraa is (or was) the junction for a line running to Haifa via the Sea of Galilee but I doubt if any part of it is now in use.

Shortly after entering Jordan we picked up more customs officials who were waiting at a wayside halt, and at the first station of any importance, Mafrak, we collected a string of wagons. The line then descended through increasingly dry and bare countryside, with a final stiff climb to Amman, which was reached three hours late. A friendly stationmaster showed me round the cramped loco shed, but would not permit any photography. By now all was quiet, with no other trains due until the following day, so I left the station, getting a picture of a dumped 4-6-4T on the way, caught a bus to the city centre, and in due course found a seat in a collective taxi for the final leg of the journey, down to the Dead Sea and up again to Jerusalem."

28:26.

THE ISRAEL RAILWAYS ADVANCEMENT SOCIETY.

This new (or revived) group has had its first meeting, in October 1994. One of its initial aims is to gather statistics and studies on railways in other countries, to enable serious analysis of the options for railways in Israel. Anyone who can help, or wishes details of this serious study group, looking more at the future than - as is normal - the past, is asked to contact: David Stiffelman, at 16, Aharon Dov Street, Benei Berak 51408, Israel.

28:27.

PR Nasmyth-Wilson 0-6-0T No. 46 at Haifa, 2/10/45.
(Photo: R. J. Ireson.)

