

# HARAKEVET

# הרכבת

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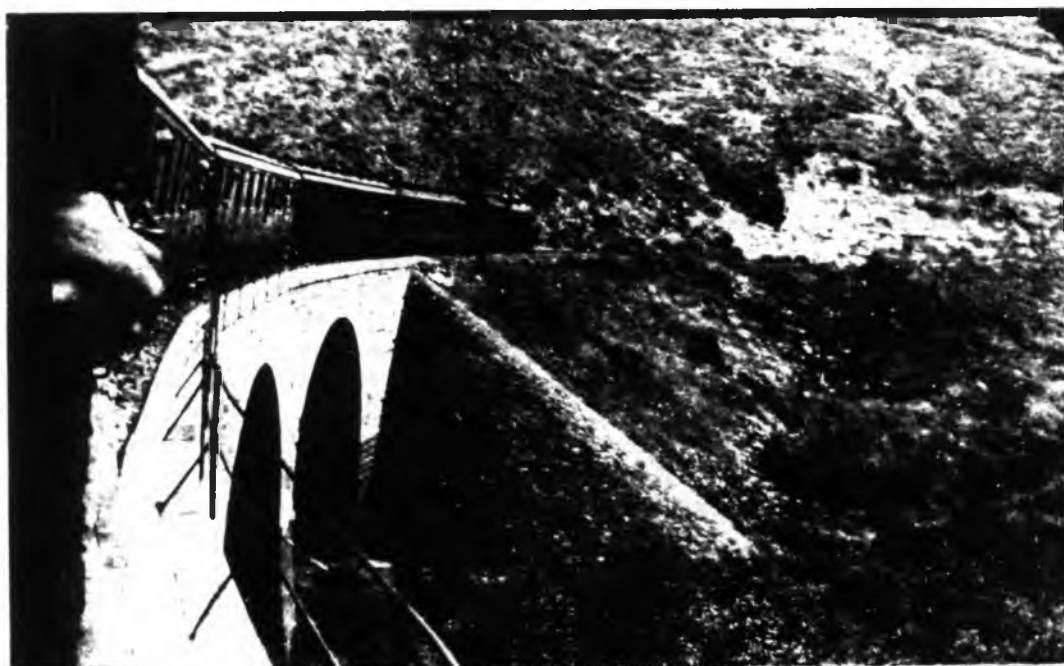
Welcome to Issue 7. This has been a long time in production - partly due to a flood of enquiries and new subscriptions occupying most of the spare time I would otherwise have devoted to preparation ! Again, I have been able to put together an issue reflecting railway history from the Turkish, Mandate and State periods; I have used up some remaining pages prepared "old-style" on the manual typewriter - thus completing the range of excerpts from the P.E.F. Quarterly Statements I am grateful to several correspondents for sending me news, articles and photographs; again, some have been held over for Issue 8. Reviews in this issue include the "Hedjaz Railway" by Rick Lourret - long-awaited and well worth waiting for - and David Tirosh's Hebrew history/guide to the "Rakevet Ha'Emek" - the surviving relics of the Hedjaz line in Israel. Paul Cotterell's researches into Coaches are extended here - his work on Industrial Locos will appear in the next issue.

I remain fascinated by the sheer variety of research work being undertaken in different parts of the globe, and the variety of subjects - armoured trains, tramway schemes, military history etc. Especially valuable are memoirs of those who have worked on the railways - and this issue I can present both a lengthy account of a railwayman in the period after the First World War, and of a senior engineer during the Second World War. Please keep sending stuff in !

This newsletter remains amateur and, despite subscriptions from several readers, remains funded largely by myself. In consequence it looks likely to retain this format and irregularity for a while, as in no way can it be described as "commercial". I can only hope that you find the content makes up for any other deficiencies.

Shalom.

Rabbi Walter Rothschild.



Heading up the Yarmuk Valley.

(Photo: Garraway Collection No. 15A.)

1. SOME NEWS FROM THE LINE. Some of this is a little "old", but is incorporated here for the sake of completeness.

#### Loco 701.

After arrival, 701 did little work at first but languished in the depot awaiting parts, then went to Qishon to have a non-automatic coupler fitted. It worked its first train (329 to Lod, 304 back) on the night Sunday 14-15/5/89. It was found to be slightly overweight which meant speed-restrictions being imposed between Benei Berak and Lod, where there are suspect bridges.

701 worked passenger trains for four days in 6/89. It has recently become the "flagship" loco, being used to haul inaugural trains at the opening of the refurbished Herzliyya station and the new Dimona loco depot, and appearing on publicity material as the acme of modernity and power.

#### 2. Accidents and incidents.

1. On Fri. 12/5/89 Train 26, headed by 121, hit a tractor at an unguarded crossing north of Herzliyya, killing the 70-year old tractor driver. No. 116, the Binyamina pilot, was sent down to the rescue, and hauled the loco and train to Haifa, arriving 80 mins. down. Slight damage was caused to 121 and the leading (ex-BR) Mk.IIC coach.

2. On Sun. 14/5/89 the loco of train 26 failed at Tel Aviv Merkaz; another loco had to be sent to retrieve it, and the train left an hour late.

3. At the beginning of November 1989, Esslingen 0-6-ODH 218 was shunting the Haifa East marshalling yard when its driver failed to notice a wagon fouling an adjacent siding. In the resulting collision 218 was fairly well filleted. It was last reported dumped in the diesel depot minus useful parts, and is assumed to have been withdrawn.

4. On the night of 18-19/12/89 freight 302 derailed near Rosh Ha'Ayin, with seven or eight loaded phosphate wagons leaving the rails. The derailment happened in a thickly-wooded area making access to the site extremely difficult and severely hampering clearing-up operations. The line was eventually reopened to traffic on 23/12. In the meantime, trains 11 and 14 (to and from Jerusalem) were terminated at or started from Tel Aviv, the empty stock being stabled at Tel Aviv Merkaz during the day. (N.B. There is no passenger stock stabled at Jerusalem overnight, so there would have been nothing with which to run any service Jerusalem-Lod.)

5. At noon on Friday 26/1/90 a motorised platelayers' trolley collided with a Subaru car on an unguarded level crossing at Kilo. 81 between Herzliyya and Shefayim; several people in the trolley and car were hospitalised with light to medium injuries. Train 28 was held at Herzliyya for nearly 2 hours before the line could be cleared, some trains were cancelled and others severely disrupted and delayed.

6. Use of SAFB-built bo-bos on passenger trains is now almost unknown. On 28/1/90 loco 107 on train 21 broke down en route to Tel Aviv. According to the working timetable the loco of this train is required to haul train 11 (from Akko to Jerusalem) between Tel Aviv and Tel Barukh; here Train 11 reverses again to continue to Jerusalem, with the loco from Train 21 returning light engine to Tel Aviv to work Train 24 back to Haifa. A complicated manoeuvre, necessitated by the continued absence of the third side of the Tel Barukh triangle. On this date the Benei Berak shunter was hastily summoned to Tel Aviv to substitute for the failed loco; as luck would have it this was Belgian-built bo-bo 101, which thereby had the distinction of heading Train 11 over the four kilometres from Tel Aviv to Tel Barukh. It remained attached to the Jerusalem train as far as Benei Berak, so returning to its regular duties.

A further brief use in 1989 saw a SAFB bo-bo pressed into use to bring a passenger train - thought to be No. 31 - from Haifa Mizrach to Haifa Merkaz because of an emergency apparently involving late running of a train from Tel Aviv and consequent absence of the rostered G12; the Belgian loco was then relieved and sent back to the diesel depot.

### 3. Developments.

1. Some 100 metres of track at Tel Barukh Junction on the Benei Berak line have been temporarily slewed. This is to allow a road over-bridge for the continuation of the Netivei Ayalon road project to be built. The slewing was carried out on 13/5/89.

2. At the end of December 1989 Israel TV began screening a 30-second commercial for the railways - the first-ever such venture by IR. Featured are 701 and the first four coaches to have been refurbished. These formed a special train for filming (including aerial shots) between Haifa and Hof Carmel in November '89. The commercial is slick and professional in the current fashion of showing practically everything - including a train journey - to be "party time". The refreshment car seems to have become a singles bar, and a train is now the in place for boy to meet girl! Presumably, also, IR relaxed its line speed limit for this special train, as 701 appears to be humming along at TGV speeds !

3. G12 107 was returned to traffic on 23/1/90 following a less-than-artistic repaint. The "lining out" had been applied with suitably-coloured stick-on tape, and showed every likelihood of being stripped off by a few showers of rain. 107 has also had its conical exhaust outlets removed. These had been applied to all the IR G12s in the 1970's - presumably to throw exhaust fumes clear of the loco cab and leading coaches of trains - and now seem to be removed as locos visit Qishon Works. (No. 111 had its exhaust outlets taken off in 1989).

4. A second set of refurbished coaches entered service on 31/12/89; these were 57 (Generator coach), 636, 685 (ex-BR Mk. II) and 614 (Restaurant car). A third set of 4 refurbished coaches entered service on 24/1/90, behind T44. Coaches concerned are 58 (Generator coach), 688, 635 and 613 (restaurant car). A correction to 6:3, para. 4: The upper half of the refurbished coaches is not white but a very pale blue.

5. At the end of 1989 finishing touches were being applied to three stations which have been upgraded. Especially noteworthy are the improvements carried out at Binyamina and Bet Yehoshua stations, both of which have been practically rebuilt. Platforms have been lengthened and surfaced with patterned brickwork. Curved canopy shelters have been erected, station signs have been improved, and car parks extended. Decorative ironwork fencing adorns the station area and adequate seating has been provided. Distinctive new lamp standards have also been erected. Binyamina's new paint scheme is in dark green with Bet Yehoshua's being dark blue. The improvements are really striking and generally excellent. The only aesthetic criticism is that the canopy shelters are slightly overpowering and perhaps too modern-looking to be entirely in character. This is particularly so at Binyamina with its old British-built stone station building, though it is good to see that this too has been cleaned of years of dirt on the white limestone blocks.

At Hadera less has so far been done on renovations, but the station has been repainted with dark blue trimmings, extra seating provided, and decorative ironwork is being put up. Other small details and a general tidying-up have again led to a thoroughly-attractive and happy improvement to the station's appearance. However, these have not been without one glaring error. A large nameboard has been set up on the station roof, and the sign-writer's version of the name reads "HEDERA" !

6. The new three-road diesel maintenance depot at Dimona was officially opened with a ceremony on 1/1/90. In attendance was the Transport Minister, Moshe Katsav, the General Manager of the Ports and Railways Authority, Shmuel Raziell, and the General Manager of Israel railways, Eliahu Barak. The tape-cutting ceremony was performed by Moshe Katsav from the running-plate of GT26CW-2 701, which then entered one of the bays. Speeches were made, and participants then partook of a cold buffet lunch.

4.

EILAT OSTRICH FARM.

A little while ago I was sent some pictures, from an Eilat tourist guide, (for 16/6/89), showing a diesel loco and four wagon bodies at an "Ostrich Farm" near Eilat. Thanks to others nearer the place, I can say that the loco came from Yuval Gad at Ashkelon, where it shunted the sidings, and is said to have been built in Chicago.

It is a standard-gauge 4-wheel diesel, bearing the name "Caterpillar" on the radiator cover. There are no building details, but one plate bears the legend "Exclusive Export Agents, Pressed Steel Car Company Inc., "Steelcar" Trade Mark, New York, USA., Chicago, London." It is quite tiny for a standard-gauge loco, and is now painted black with red handrails. The van bodies (looking like "25Taf" grain vans) are laid out in a curved row, and serve apparently as buffet, office and storeroom.

Does anyone have any more information ?

5.

The Saga of T44.

I suppose that "HaRakevet" will be the only place these incidents are recorded for posterity, so: These are some of the problems.

In June '89, it failed completely in mid-section between Herzliyya and Shefayim with Train 34, due to electrical trouble. It and the train were hauled to Haifa an hour down, after disrupting a couple of other trains (one hauled by 701).

In July it failed in mid-section between Hof Carmel and Bat Galim with Train 38. It took 90 minutes to send out an assisting loco and clear the section. Trains 56 and 14 had to wait at Hof Carmel until Train 38 arrived at Bat Galim and Train 55 got away from there. The failure was serious, again due to an electrical fault and a burn-out in the traction motors.

On 24/8/89 it was double-heading with a G12 on freight 329 to Lod, with some 1650 tons, when it failed on the hill between Binyamina and Hadera West. It had to be dumped on track 3 at Hadera, the G12 taking the freight onwards, and was towed back to Haifa on 25/8.

On 14/11 it took Train 23 to Tel Aviv and had just set out on the return journey to Haifa with Train 26 when two of the four traction motors failed; it managed to limp back to Haifa on half-power, arriving 45 minutes late.

During December '89 the loco performed well; clearly the Kalmar representative had worked hard, and a special 'link' of loco drivers was set up to operate T44 (which still has no IR number !).

On 23/1/90 T44, hauling Train 51, began to lose power after Atlit and failed completely at Zichron Ya'akov. The Binyamina shunter, 124, was summoned, T44 was dumped on Track 3 at Zichron, and Train 51 resumed its journey 40 minutes late with 124. Unconfirmed reports indicate another burnt-out traction motor.

I have received the following description of a ride on T44 from Tel Aviv to Haifa, on 24th. December '89:

"The cab is broad, high and very spacious, and the interior appointments have been extremely well thought out with crew comfort very much in mind. A small thing, perhaps, but I particularly noticed how easy it is to open and close the cab doors - no longer any need to

put your foot on the door to slam it shut, as with the EMD-built locos. Small wonder then that, when the GM rep. was in Israel in April 1989 accompanying GT26CW-2 701 on its arrival from the USA, he expressed himself as being rather embarrassed by the rough-and-ready detailing on 701 as compared with T44.

Travel on T44 is quiet - no need to shout across to each other - and generally smooth. The springing arrangements - rather soft - do tend to emphasise any track irregularities, however. It's a bit like a voyage in a large boat on a choppy sea; There are no hard jolts at all, but T44 will surge and sway where other locos buck and rear.

It was an interesting journey in other respects as well. Train 56 leaves Tel Aviv at 1800, by which time thick patches of mist had formed here and there along the main line as far north as Hadera, and our powerful headlight reflected off these eerily. At times it was like ploughing through seas of dry ice, at others the mist base was hanging just above cab height. It reminded me of airplane flights at dusk, with the plane entering and leaving layers of cloud. All rather ethereal; and emphasised by the read-outs beeping on-and-off on the display panel. Captain Kirk (of Starship Enterprise) would have appreciated the trip. T44 had no difficulty regaining a few minutes lost at Netanya waiting to cross Train 39 and a couple more lost at Kilo. 22 where the automatic level crossing was on the blink, and brought its seven-coach train into Bat Galim on time. Indeed, it was all-too-easy to find that we were exceeding the line speed limit of 105 km/h, as it was difficult to judge the speed empirically in the almost-hermetically-sealed and sound-proofed cab, and the driver was constantly having to consult the speedometer.

It was good, also, to note that the crews seem to appreciate the special provisions made for them aboard T44, as the cab interior was kept clean and tidy, in contrast to the G12s and 'Jumbos'; the exterior of T44 was clean as well."

Göran Dahlberg writes:

"We Swedes like to think that our products are the best in the world; therefore the saga of the T44 is most embarrassing. The T44 in Sweden performs very well indeed. In all kinds of sometimes-shocking weather conditions, they just run. The T44 is used on non-electrified lines for both passenger and goods trains. In the Gothenburg area they are used for heavy shunting on harbour tracks and industrial spurs. We are soon getting them down here (in Halmstad); they will be used for pulling unit-trains of paper rolls from the Hyltebruk paper mill to Halmstad harbour.

The Austrian firm of Roco will release a model of the T44 in HO Scale late this year or early next year."

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6.

Note: Allan Garraway has the negatives of many photos taken by his late father, and can produce prints @ £1 each (£1.10 at under 5 prints) plus p. & p. For details, contact him at "Coedwig", Nethy Bridge Road, Boat of Garten, PH24 3BQ, Great Britain. The photos are all fascinating, even if some of them were taken in difficult conditions and show it a little.

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7. REVIEW: "RAKEVET HA'EMEK" (The Valley Railway". by David Tirosh.  
 Published (In Hebrew) by The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. 99 pages. Price NIS 18.

Reviewed by Sybil Ehrlich.

This very attractive little book is packed with information on the Jezreel Valley Railway, which ran from Haifa to Damascus between 1905 and 1948. It contains chapters on the planning and construction of the line, reminiscences of old-timers who worked on it or lived in the villages served by it in the 1930's and 1940's, and amusing anecdotes which entered Israeli folklore, such as the joke about the man who decided to commit suicide, lay down on the tracks of the Valley Railway, notorious for its erratic timekeeping, and eventually died of starvation !

The book is intended for the general reader who is interested in exploring the country and its recent past. Anyone expecting tables of locomotives and technical details might be disappointed !

One chapter, "A Tour of the Line", gives the history of the 24 stations and other features of the section of the line in present-day Israel, and a description of what remains of each today. Some stations which were no more than a sign board have disappeared without trace, but others are remarkably well-preserved. For example, one of the complex of five station buildings at Afula now houses a public library, and the station at Kfar Yehoshua was restored for the village's 60th. anniversary in 1987.

There are several sketch maps and reproductions of old plans, letters and timetables, in English and Hebrew, as well as 49 photographs, ancient and modern, including 12 in full colour. One colour photo depicts an unusual water tower at Tzemach, built of the black basalt stone typical of the area.

Perhaps the most extraordinary fact about the Valley Railway is that Israel Railways, which now owns the land, has never permitted any building on it. According to David Tirosh, the Beit She'an Local Council has even discussed (January 1988) with the Ministry of Tourism the possibility of restoring services from Afula to Beit She'an as part of a plan to develop tourism in the area. We can but hope !

(Editor's Note: Having traversed most of the route myself in 1981, I can vouch for the excellence and thoroughness of Tirosh's photographic survey. However, part of the line between Tel Hanan and the Kishon river bridge has now been absorbed in a road-widening scheme.

One day someone should do a PhD on the origins of the jokes about the Rakevet HaEmek. Some of them have parallels with jokes about the Württemberg State Railways, the Southwold Railway, American branch lines - in short, they might reflect the humour of the various immigrants ! When did each first appear ? What are the folkloristic parallels with the railroad humour of Upper Nebraska ? The possibilities for pompous research are endless....)

8.



Thanks to Alon Siton for this special post-mark commemorating the opening of the line to Beer Sheba on 29th. Sept. 1956.

Clearly this is meant to be a representation of the Esslingen diesel railcar sets.

היום הוא מיוחד לכבוד  
 תנועת הרכבת  
 בנאר-שבע.

29.3.1956—תש"ז

9. ARMoured TRAINS. 1916 - 1919. By Hugh Hughes.

Some interesting details concerning the operation of armoured trains on the standard gauge line Eastwards from Kantara during World War I can be gleaned from studying the War Diaries of the units concerned, preserved at the Public Record Office at Kew, London.

The diary of the Director of Railway Transport, Egyptian Expeditionary Force, for 3rd. May 1916 recorded that the composition of the armoured train for the Kantara-Romani line had been fixed as :- Empty wagon, pom-pom wagon, infantry escort wagon, engine, searchlight wagon, pom-pom wagon, empty wagon. (A "pom-pom" was an automatic quick-firing gun). However it is clear from later entries that the formation was by no means constant.

The earliest entries for No. 1 Armoured Train itself were dated 3rd. July 1916, at Kantara, and were mainly concerned with daily routine and duties:

"Standing Orders. Attention is directed to the following orders:-

1. Senior N. C. O. in each truck is responsible not only for the truck but for the cleanliness underneath and around it.
2. No-one except officers and R. E. are allowed on the roof of the train when it is moving.
3. Men sleeping under the train and standing on the buffers when the train is in motion, or displaying culpable ignorance of the other dangers of a railway, will have no claim on the Government for compensation.
4. Strangers are forbidden to enter the trucks or loiter on the platforms or permanent way alongside the train.
- 4A. Particular attention is drawn to the order that caps must not be worn between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. (i.e. wear pith helmets!).
5. Parade tomorrow for both British and Egyptian detachments and R.E. for the allotment of stations in action on the train. Searchlights will be worked between 8.30 and 9.30 p.m."

"Duties in Action and Tactics.

1. Defensive positions along railway line will be lettered A, B, C, etc.  
The train will be ordered to move to A, B, or C as directed. These positions will be allotted later after reconnaissance. Range charts will be made of them and the ground in the neighbourhood studied.
2. Positions of guns and maxims. ("maxim" was a machine gun.)  
1st. Gun Truck pointing downline; 2nd. Gun Truck and Maxim on right of train.
3. Stand to arms in position as follows:  
C.O. in 1st. Gun Truck with O.C. Artillery.  
O.C. Escort in 2nd. Gun Truck with Lieut. Artillery.
4. 2 Lookout men to be detailed for each side of the Escort Trucks.
5. Guard. 1 N.C.O. & 6 men provide double sentry in open truck.  
Duty of sentry to watch line for obstruction. On obstruction being seen call will be "Line Blocked". The brakesman will at once put on brakes and telephone Operator will press engine signal bell continuously.
6. One private in each truck for ammunition, water and messages during action. R. A. M. C. in 2nd. Escort Truck.
7. Signals for searchlights & for moving trains will be as directed.
8. Officers of Egyptian Artillery will supervise the exchange of ranges with the British. They will see that the gun embrasures are closed by iron plates when not in use.



9. All reserve fanatis will be kept filled with fresh water. Fanatis will be emptied, when water is drawn, in regular rotation. On Patrol men are to carry filled water bottles and ammunition. Outside of Kantara no officer or man, British or Egyptian, must on any account leave the train without arms, ammunition & filled water bottle."

Later entries laid down that the Arab Town was out of bounds at all times, bathing off the beach at Port Said was permitted "at the authorised place", British troops and natives were not to travel in the same trucks on the railway, and the wearing of metal badges in helmets was prohibited (no doubt to avoid reflection of the sun's rays!).

The commander was Major B. de W. Weldon, of the Lancashire Fusiliers, but on 29th. August 1916 he returned to his duties with the Egyptian Army and Lieutenant (later Captain) G.A.F. Adam of the Scottish Horse took over. Troops from the Lanarkshire Yeomanry formed the escort while members of the Scottish Horse were the machine gunners; two sappers from the Royal Engineers completed the British military personnel. As the Diary commented: "The Indian Government originally supplied the Infantry, Maxim Guns and Equipment, the Egyptian Army the Artillery, the E. E. F. (Egyptian Expeditionary force) the present escort, the E. S. R. (Egyptian State Railways) the train. The equipment therefore is somewhat mixed, the different Commandants apparently acting on the principle that what A refused B might give."

On 3rd. August 1916 the train left Kantara with rations and water for four day to patrol to Romani. However the petrol locomotive failed between Gilban and Pelusium so that the Egyptian State Railway steam engine and crew had to be summoned from Kantara. Romani was duly reached and at about 11.30pm. heavy firing commenced from the Turkish forces. "This continued, in desultory fashion, the whole night the Train being hit by bursting shrapnel a good many times so we kept moving about and back into a cutting about two Kilos from Romani, near Canterbury Hill."

Early next morning they were bombed by three enemy aircraft. "About 6-30 a.m. of the 4th. inst. we came under very heavy Artillery Fire, shrapnel bursting all over the station. At this point I regret to say the Engine Driver and Brakesman bolted, leaving their engine, and we were unable to move. They were away for over half an hour. The firing subsided and they returned when I placed them under arrest, placing an armed guard on the tender." They returned to Kilo 38 (from Kantara) and fired their Mountain Guns, manned by the Egyptian Artillery, until eventually the Turks retreated and the train resumed its patrolling.

Lieutenant Adams later wrote: "A steel bomb proof roof has been put on the Train and the whole Train improved so as to be almost unrecognisable from what it originally was. We have been continually patrolling the line since the action at Romani, part of which time we were ahead of the Army covering the Railway Construction companies." By January 1917 they were based at El Arish, and at Khan Yunis in April. Night patrols were frequently carried out, and their searchlights and machine guns were often in action against enemy aircraft. In May 1918 they were patrolling the Rafa - Beersheba line, and in July they were operating as far as Wadi Surar Junction. But in December 1918 the train returned to Kantara and was dismantled and the vehicles handed back to the E. S. R.



No. 2 Armoured Train operated only in Egypt, with a steam locomotive as motive power. No. 3 Armoured Train however was formed in July 1916 and arrived at Kantara towards the end of that month. It operated much the same way as No. 1 Train, being based mostly at El Arish during 1917 and going up as far as Beersheba in the following year. But in March 1919 it was transferred to Egypt and worked in the Upper Nile area.

The motive power used on Nos. 1 & 3 Trains were part of a war Office batch of ten 180 HP 4-coupled petrol locomotives, with 6-cylinder Thornycroft engines, built by Manning Wardle of Leeds. Only three were sent to Egypt, numbered 2 to 4 (MW 1868-70 of Jan 1916), and they proved to be unreliable; usually two were in use on the armoured trains while the third was under repair at Kantara, but often a steam locomotive had to be substituted. No information is available as regards their fate after the war.



Manning-Wardle petrol loco. for armoured train - under repair at Kantara Workshops. It appears the engine has been removed from the frames.

Photo: Ron Garraway. (Garraway Collection No. 132).

10. "A New Railway Museum ?" - By Alon Siton. Netanya.

Recently I had the opportunity to participate in a trip to the central part of Israel, and in the process reached Karmey Yosef ("Joseph's Vineyards"). This is one of the places regarded as a home for rich and wealthy Israelis, and in consequence what I saw there left me more than just surprised. Firstly, it should be explained that the place is still developing, so many houses are still under construction. In consequence the people there had to find temporary alternatives to certain facilities that most of us use daily. I knew already that Israel Railways policy was to sell off old wagons and keep the bogies for scrap value, but I hadn't the slightest idea how that could end - an ordinary wooden freight wagon ended its life as a synagogue, and next to it stands another wagon which, still with the IR logo on, is used as a grocery. (Both retain their buffers). No sooner had we left this odd couple of wagons than we encountered an Esslingen driving coach, this time painted in simple white from top to bottom, and seemingly empty. On leaving Karmey Yosef I assumed we had seen all the railway vehicles possible but, no more than 200m from the entrance stood a couple more freight wagons: an ex-IR wooden wagon, identical to the ones described above, and an ex-PR wagon, the kind that is much bigger and, sadly, no longer used at all.

At present it is still unclear how many wagons were originally sent to Karmey Yosef, but it seems that up to six months ago (i.e. June '89) one could still spot various other vehicles. As I mentioned before there is still much work to be done and further wagons may be expected. Unfortunately I had no time to pull out the camera and get any photos, so I can only hope to get the chance to return before the wagons are removed. Nevertheless, it does look like the start to an unusual new railway museum !

Editor's Note: Alon mentions no numbers; I would assume that most of these vans are "25Tar" Grain vans, many of which are now scattered around the countryside; the bigger van might be a "35Aleph" American box van. Can anyone help, or get me some photos (or colour transparencies ?)

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11. A Philatelic Curiosity.

In Issue 5:7 I made mention of an Egyptian postage stamp that showed the railway line through the Gaza Strip; Alon Siton has now identified this as having been issued on 4th. May 1957, in 111,400 copies. He has sent me a copy of p.108 of an (unidentified) German catalogue - I think the Michel one - which adds the following information:

"From 1/11/1956 to 6/3/1957 the Gaza area was occupied by Israeli troops. Israeli Post Offices were established in Gaza (from 10/12/1956), Dir el Balah (Deir el Balah) (from 3/1/1957), Han Yunus (Khan Yunis) (from 3/1/1957) and Rafiah (Rafah) (from 22/1/1957), that issued only Israeli stamps.

On 6/3/1957 the area was again occupied by Egypt, and the previously-used stamps partially reissued. For a short time (March 1957) Egyptian stamps overprinted "Palestine" were also issued."

"Our" stamp was a special issue to mark the occupation of Gaza; a dark-blueish-green 10M value, also in an altered colour with red overprint PALESTINE, also in Arabic.



12. STANDARD GAUGE COACHES OF PALESTINE AND ISRAEL - AN UPDATE.

By Paul Cotterell.

Having given an update of the loco lists (see 5.5 & 6.2), I guess I ought to do the same for the passenger stock tabulated on p.138 of "The Railways of Palestine and Israel". Considering the limited number of coaches, the story is an extremely complicated one, and I do not propose to do more here than amend the basic list in my book. Passenger vehicles on PR were rebuilt with seemingly-merry abandonment to the bewilderment and despair (or masochistic joy) of researchers. Particularly intriguing, even mysterious, is the detailed history of the Midland and LSWR coaches sent out as ambulances in WW1. Ray Ellis, Hugh Hughes and I have discussed at length the old PR coaches, with special emphasis on those ambulances, and I believe that we are now much closer to a comprehensive - if not definitive - picture. Perhaps one of these fine days, we'll get around to publishing the results of our discussions.

But, for now, let's concentrate on those lists. My thanks to Ray and Hugh for their considerable input.

Midland and LSWR Ambulance Coaches.

Right at the outset it must be stated that there were 16 Midland and 12 LSWR vehicles involved, and not 17 and 13 as I had given. What threw me was that PR list of 1947 which, if you add them up, certainly does show 17 MR and 13 LSWR coaches. However, other sources show the lower figures for ambulances shipped out from England and there is now no doubt that PR did not conjure up a couple of coaches out of thin air. It was the relatively recent discovery of an outline drawing which finally convinced me of the error of my ways. This rough sketch shows that PR Saloon No.95 dates only from 1944 when it was "rebuilt" on the frames of a withdrawn Midland coach (evidently those of 99, 105 or 305). PR omitted to mention this not unimportant point in their list.

So, strike one Midland coach from the total in my book.

It is reasonable to assume that something similar happened to one of the LSWR vehicles (i.e. a "rebuilding" along the same lines), but I have not come across any such conveniently corroborative evidence for this supposition as I did with the Midland coach.

While on the subject, let it be noted that numerous coaches (including LSWR and MR examples) were victims of the Disturbances in the late 1930's, and of further sabotage immediately after WWII - some being rebuilt for further service, some not. I have two full-plate photos showing LSWR coaches dumped at Qishon Works after being burned down to their frames. The photos are undated but in the style of other shots taken by the official photographer (assuming such a person to have existed) during the late 1930's.

Birmingham RC&W Coaches:

Some works plates now displayed in the Haifa East Railway Museum are confirmation that these coaches were built in 1921 and 1922. I have not been able to discover exactly which coaches were constructed in which year, but Hugh's account of his journey between Damascus and Cairo (5.11) shows Nos. 120 and 122 to have been built in 1921 so I think it safe to conclude that No. 121 also dated from that year.

Wagon-Lits Coaches:

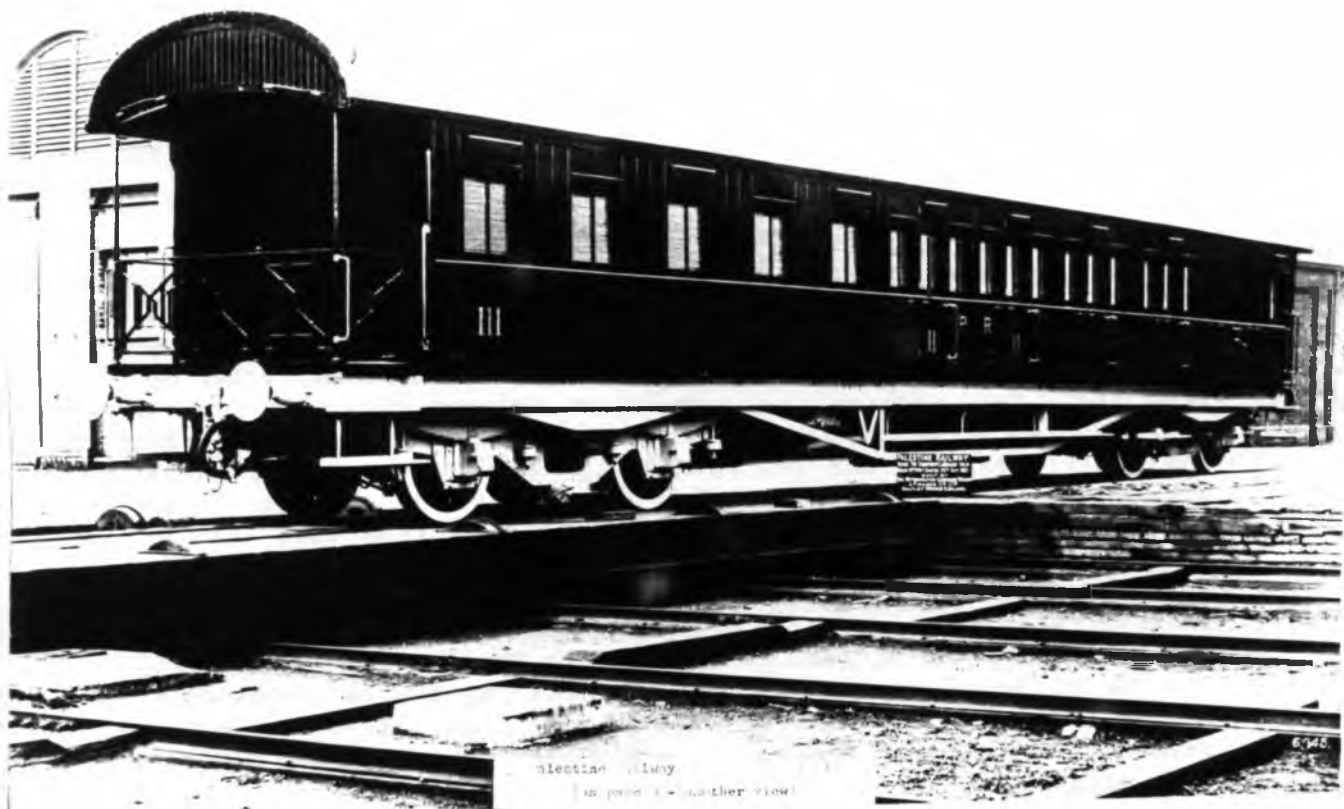
Restaurant Car No. 2351 was built in 1912, not 1913.

Metropolitan RC&W Coaches:

Nos. 504 and 505 were built in 1921, not 1922. They were originally constructed as Brake Tri-Composites (1st/2nd/3rd) with a single open end platform, being rebuilt to Brake/3rd in 1935-6. Ray is of the very reasonable opinion that, in their original form, they were intended for the exceedingly sparse service between Raiah and Beersheba where they could accomodate all classes of passengers without recourse to strengthening (and adding to train weight) by tacking on an extra coach or two. Since this mixed-train service was withdrawn as early as 1927, it seems likely that demand never exceeded the capacity of one of the Brake Tri-Compos.

PR Brake Tri-Composite No. 504 built by Metropolitan RC&W in 1921, showing the open end balcony.

(Photo: Crown Agents, collection of Paul Cotterell).

Israel Railways Coaches:

Nos. 71 - 84 were built by Carel Fouché.

No. 82 had its seats re-upholstered in plush material in 1987 for use as a reserved seating coach. However, this did not justify its upgrading, and it was returned to ordinary use after a month or two.

Nos. 638 and 640 - 2 have had their seating rearranged to provide more legroom, and tables have been fitted - these coaches being upgraded for reserved seating accomodation. They, too, have had their seats re-upholstered in plush instead of the plastic covering to be found in the ordinary coaches, and headrests have been fitted. In the case of 638 and 642 the tables have upward-folding leaves (leafs ?) to make it easier to get into and out of the seats. One drawback to the new arrangements is that most of the seats no longer correspond to the windows, so many passengers see little of the passng scenery. (Shades of the BR "Sprinters" !) Dates for these conversions are:

638: August 1989; 640 : 1980; 641: 1984; 642: June 1989.

At the time of writing, several IR coaches are in the process of being fitted with air-conditioning and heating units.

Apropro Coaches.

Not, perhaps, strictly relevant since these coaches have not run at all in Israel, but I make no apology for mentioning them here.

Apropro Ltd. is a company owning several restaurants and, evidently to boost its public profile, bought five redundant coaches from British Rail in 1987 with the intention of using them as a restaurant complex at Kiryat Shaul in North Tel Aviv. When Harel Even and I visited there on 13/11/87 the coaches were set up on their wheels and on short individual lengths of track. Their details, mostly taken from the coaches at the time, are as follows:

- Mk.1 SK M18768, built Derby 1961 to Lot 30685. (formerly M25768; 48 seats, Commonwealth bogies).
- Mk.1 TSO E3947, built Eastleigh 1954 to Lot 30085. (64 seats).
- Mk.1 CK E7645, built Wolverton 1956 to Lot 30158. (formerly 15645, 24 1st. class seats, 18 2nd. class.)
- Mk.1 BG (NDV) 84438, built Pressed Steel 1957 to Lot 30400.
- Mk.2 SO E5250 built Derby 1966 to Lot 30752.  
(Incidentally, these details differ slightly from those published on page 11 of the "Rail Enthusiast" of October 1987, but agree with those given on page 520 of "Modern Railways" for the same month).
- Mk.2 E5250 was in BR's InterCity livery (mainly grey), while the Mk1. 1's were all in blue and grey. From shipping labels still attached to one of the coaches it was apparent that they had been unloaded at Ashdod port either in late August or early September 1987.

Something went wrong with this venture though, and by 25/3/88, when Harel and I happened across them again, they had been dumped at the East end of the freight yard at Benei Barak station. Then, in mid-June 1988, they suddenly reappeared in a field on the West side of the Haifa - Tel Aviv main line at kilometre post 80.5 (Kfar Shamarayahu), where they are easily visible from passing trains. And there, as of September 1989, they still remain. It would seem that the owner retains hopes of recovering his investment somehow but, as the bodies are now separated from the bogies, I doubt that their prolonged sojourn in the field will do them much good as their bogies (particularly that of the Mk. 2) are likely to twist out of true when they are not sitting on their bogies.

I hope I have not forgotten any relevant basic information in these notes but, if so, perhaps someone will keep me on the straight and narrow.

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13. "BOMBS IN HAIFA TRAIN." From the Jewish Chronicle" of 15th. April 1938, p. 21:

"Two British policemen were killed at Haifa on Monday when examining a sack which contained two bombs. The brakeman of a train belonging to the Iraq Petroleum Company, which was carrying workmen of the oil company, reported the presence of a suspicious-looking sack. The carriage was locked and the train was taken to Haifa terminus. As the police picked up the sack, the bombs exploded.

A Jewish-owned bus, which passed as the explosion occurred, was stoned by an Arab crowd who were under the impression that Jews had thrown a bomb. Seven Jewish passengers were injured.

Earlier in the day, two other suspicious-looking sacks had been found in the train. It returned to Haifa, and the sacks were removed. A bomb in one exploded later, killing an Arab special constable and wounding an Arab sergeant and two other Arabs."

(Editor's note: Did the I.P.C. own the train? It was more likely a special working to the refineries in the Haifa area, presumably on the narrow-gauge, and the sacks would have been intended for the oil installations rather than the brakevan of a workmen's train.)

14. A TRIP ON THE HEDJAZ RAILWAY IN 1942. By Theo Peiz.  
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In 1942 I was serving with No. 4 Company of the Palestine regiment. We were stationed in Atlit (opposite the immigrants camp), and our duties included escorting W.D. supplies etc. in the Middle East.

We left Atlit on 31st. August 1942 at 1720 hours by truck, and arrived at Neshar (the present Army Camp North of the highway) at 1820 hours. We were detailed to two (?) open bogie cars loaded with aviation gasoline for Mairaq in Transjordan, and left Neshar next morning for Haifa East behind one of the Krauss 0-6-0 tank locos. The day was spent in Haifa East, and the freight train taking us to Samakh left only at 2200 hrs. I do not recall what type of loco was in front. I had intended to keep awake and watch the countryside, but I frequently dozed off and do not remember much of the night trip. Sometime past midnight we stopped at a station. A ghattir (auxiliary policeman) was standing in front of the station building, and I asked him where we were. The reply was: "This is Shatta station". The building is now used as a prison.

We then descended into the Jordan valley, stopping at Jisr el Majamiya, passing Naharayim Halt after crossing the Jordan bridge, crossed the Yarmuq bridge, and arrived at Samakh sometime between two and three in the morning. This is where the engines were changed, since the French C.F.H. took over there. The journey continued, as far as I can remember now, behind a Jung loco. I was still dozing on and off, and awoke only at El Hamma, last stop in Palestine. I still recall the luxuriant vegetation and copious flow of water in the Yarmuq River. Leaving Palestine the next stop was at Wadi Khaled where we saw a Hohenzollern tank loco and a fine French railcar with, I believe, teak outside and blue plush seats. This was probably an inspection car. We passed Shajara and Makaren with the driving wheels slipping badly, especially near the former station, climbed through the first loop along a northern tributary of the Yarmuq, and stopped at Zeizoun. This was probably where we took water, since it was the last station before the long climb to Muzzerib and the Syrian plateau. This was a hard job; leaving Zeizoun we crossed the large steel bridge which Lawrence had failed to blow up in 1918, climbed past Tel-esh-Shehab Halt without stopping (there was just a signboard there), and finally arrived at Muzzerib where the old trackbed of the defunct D.H.P. line was still visible. We finally reached Deraa at 0945 hours. Much shunting was being carried out in the station, the shunter using a horn just as in France at that time. I only stepped outside for a short time to buy some fruit in the bazaar, remaining most of the time with the other men (three or four commanded by a Lance-Corporal). We had our meals on the tarpaulin-covered four-gallon tins. People used to relieve themselves during the journey by standing on the couplings !

Deraa was left at about 1640 hours. The first stop was at Qum-Guarz where the line to Bosra branches off to the East. Our loco this time was a Hedjaz Railway Hartmann type, since this section of the line was operated by the Palestine Railways. The Syrian-Transjordan border was passed at Nassib, this being a simple stone blockhouse with no sidings. Then there was a stop in the desert, apparently to make steam. This was not surprising; engines were still coal-fired at that time (conversion to oil fuel was carried out only in 1943). I do not know where the coal came from, probably South Africa or India. Anyhow, we arrived at the next station, Mairaq, at about 1900 hours. It was still light at that time, the date being 1st. September. Our wagons were shunted into the RAF siding, and we were given a tent for the night.

Leaving Mairaq next morning by truck at about 0920hrs., we passed Irbid, Samakh, Tiberias, Nazareth and Haifa, before arriving back at Atlit shortly after 1500 hours.

15 A Serviceman's "Holiday" in 1919.

In September 1919, from the 1st. to the 12th. of the month, Sergeant Major Ron Garraway made a trip from Kantara to Haifa, Damascus and Beirut. He had served a premium apprenticeship at Stratford, on the G.E.R., and was therefore in a "Reserved Occupation", i. e. not liable for conscription; however, towards the end of the war there was a call for railway people to go out to the Middle East, and he volunteered. In January 1918 he went to Bordon (on what became the Longmoor Military Railway) for a brief training to learn the rudiments of soldiering, and then went out to Egypt via Southampton and Cherbourg, thence in cattle trucks through France and Italy and across to Alexandria. When he got out there he was somewhat ostracised and not particularly wanted by the clique already established there, and was sent to Ludd (Lydda, Lod) for the first few weeks. The appointment was as a Sergeant, but he was then put in charge of the erecting shop at Kantara and made a Warrant Officer, and it was as such, Sergeant Major, that he took his brief holiday. Part of this account has been published in "Garraway: Father and Son". What follows is a verbatim transcript of the text of letters home, courtesy of Allan Garraway.

"Now to get on to the little holiday we have just had, and although I will do my very best to describe in writing some of the wonderful sights and experiences, yet I know I shall fall short of anything like an accurate picture, as words do not seem able to convey such impressions.

Jock and I left here at 11 o'clock on Sunday night by the "posh" train as it is called. It is our only passenger train and runs through to Haifa, and is usually supposed to be Officers Only, but we managed to get on the right side of the R.T.O. (Railway Transport Officer) who booked two bunks for us. Sam Biggs and another chum - the son of our late station master at West Croydon were on the station to see us off.

As soon as the train started, we got our blankets out, wrapped ourselves up and settled down for what we anticipated to be a restless night, but strange to say, we slept like logs until 7 o'clock the following morning !!

I was very glad as the first part of the journey is so uninteresting being through barren sand, but after about Gaza the orange groves begin and we ran through some very pretty groves. However 7 o'clock brought us at Ludd, the place I was stationed at last April a year ago, so we left our kit etc. in the town and went up to the mess some 5 mins. walk away, had breakfast. when we got back to the train we got some hot water from one of the engines and had a shave and wash in a mess tin, and then felt quite refreshed !

After departing from Ludd about 8.30, we continued through orange groves for a time, and then out into more open country, mostly cultivated, but one soon begins to see signs of the ravages of war, as one approaches the country more recently occupied by the Turks, but it is marvellous how everything has been cleared away. One passes quite close to Nablus, a name you may remember as figuring largely at the beginning of the final operations.

At Tul Keram, about halfway between Ludd and Haifa, there was a good deal of wreckage in the way of Turkish trains blown up, and German lorries and staff cars, but the latter have of course been collected and brought there.

By this time one is rambling along at the foot of the Judean Hills, and the country changes from the plain to the hilly, but shortly one arrives at the coast, and the journey continues along the sea shore with a background of hills. It is very pretty along here,



and so refreshing to see that rich blue of the Mediterranean after the hot yellow sand.

At various intervals along the coast where it is rocky one passes the ruins of forts now being beaten about by the waves, but originally built for defensive purposes during the wars of the Crusades. It seems so strange to see these things in actual being and to feel that our ancestors were fighting in these very lands hundreds of years ago, for one usually regards the wars of the Crusaders as little more than an adventure tale. However the scenery is still passing and we cannot stop to talk, or we shall miss Mt. Carmel on our right, the mountain upon which Christ was supposed to have led the 5,000, but I will tell you more about this when we visit it.

Haifa station is only about 5 minutes' run from Mt. Carmel and is the other terminal station to the broad or standard gauge railway. There are still a few of our fellows stationed there, so we went and sought them out, and made for ourselves an advanced base as it were for further operations. They are billeted in rather nice quarters, built on the sea shore and looking on one side right across the Bay to Acre - also of Crusaders' fame, and on the other side across the town to the hills at the back. These billets were used before we captured Haifa as barracks for Turks and Germans, and the notices written in Turkish and German still adorn the doors and walls.

We had lunch in the mess and afterwards got the car and went right up Mt. Carmel.

I was so disappointed I had not got my camera as the view from the top is simply wonderful, but when we started, we only thought we were going in the town to do some shopping. The ride up the hill was most exciting as the slope of hillside is not very far from vertical, and the road is just a ledge cut in the side. It is apparently a source of great rivalry amongst chauffeurs to ascend the hill on top gear, and thus we did. The car was a Ford and simply bounded along, but up the hill I must confess one quite gets the "wind up", for the road is so narrow, with many big bumps and one feels that the smallest fault or error in judgement sends one careering down to certain doom, down the steep rocky side.

Time being short, we did not have time to explore on top, but simply did the journey for the sake of being able to see the view. Haifa is a very pretty place to look down upon from the heights and is certainly built in many parts on European lines, as there is a German Colony with some very nice houses and gardens, situated in avenues of trees. The native quarters are of course much the same as most Eastern towns, but there is certainly a marked advance in cleanliness, due no doubt to the influence of the up-to-date European quarter.

The run down the hill was almost more exciting than the run up as of course one had the "depths below" staring you in the face all the time!

After this we had a stroll through the Loco Shops and had a look at the Turkish engines etc. There are a wonderful collection of engines there, and nearly all new modern ones. There is a tablet at Haifa commemorating the completion of the railway and it appears Johnnie Turk had only just completed his wonderful railway, and stocked it with some of the finest engines procurable, when war broke out, then had it all very rudely taken from him!! One must certainly give him credit for the construction of his railways to the 3'-6" gauge, as they are the finest and most wonderful I have ever seen, but there! I'm describing them before the journey.

The following morning (Wednesday), we got up and went for a swim in the sea. It was so jolly jumping out of bed, and running down across the sand into the sea just as we were, without any ceremony! We should have slept well that night as we were most comfortable, but unfortunately there was so much "company" that sleep was rather

disturbed and murder and massacre of whole families the result. However to continue our story, we will start with the train which left Haifa at 11 o'clock, as we did not do much else other than potter about and get some grub ready for the journey.

The train consisted of 7 bogie corridor coaches, with entrances at either end by steps and platforms similar to the American style. The seats were wooden and would have been decidedly hard had it not have been for the wonderful scenery and continual chancing from side to side of the carriage. As one leaves Haifa, one gets a rather pretty view of the Bay on the left, looking at it through a grove of palm trees, making a picture similar to those one usually sees at exhibitions depicting Eastern scenes. One turns inland straight away, and follows a sort of flat valley with hills on either side, emerging eventually into a flat fertile plain, surrounded with high hills.

We are now in the country where the final stages of Johnnie Turk's Regime took place, but it is surprising how little remains. Here and there one may see a broken gun limber lying in a field or a wrecked lorry or field kitchen, occasionally some barbed wire, but very little remains. Although the plain is flat to look upon as a whole, in detail it is slightly wavy, and I don't think one would notice it so much were it not for the railway, as one can see the road is a continual switchback.

The first station of any importance that one stops at is Afule, a name connected with very heavy fighting, and as evidenced by the damage to station and surrounding farm buildings and wreckage. In the distance tucked snugly away on the top of the hills is the town or village of Nazareth, looking extremely pretty with the sun shining on the white roofs and minarets.

Afule really marks the beginning of one of the most wonderful and thrilling railway journeys one could possibly wish for, as within about half an hour one begins the descent into the Jordan Valley. The incline down is not steep, but gradual, the curves are such that for about 5 hours of continuous travel there is not a train's length of straight line. You see one is following down along the hill side, and there are no tunnels or embankments; one is simply swinging first round to the right, then to the left following the natural contour of the hillside.

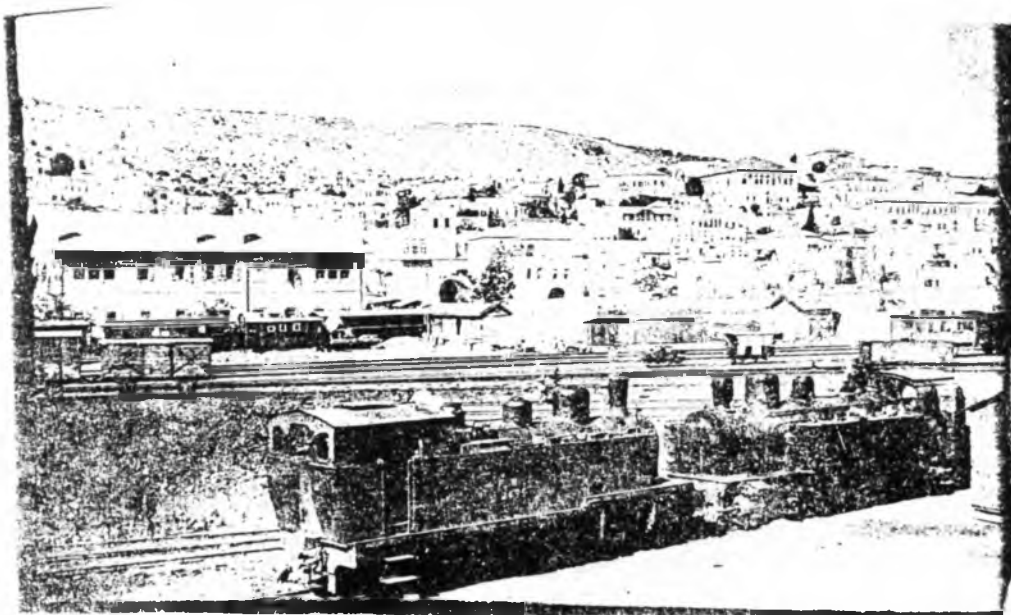
The Valley of the Jordan at this part is a flat plain, very fertile both for agriculture, mosquitoes and disease, and is about as unhealthy a spot as one could wish for. Right across the valley on the opposite side are the mountains of Moab, extremely beautiful to look upon from the distance with their rugged volcanic surface with a sort of blueish tint.

Somehow there seemed something most fascinating about these mountains, and one could not take one's eyes off them. I tried to take a photo of them, but the sun was in my face and I could not.

By this time our descent into the valley is nearly complete as it is nearly an hour since we began and the train is stopping at Samak on the borders of the Sea of Galilee. It is a wonderful view across this Sea, or lake as it would be termed in modern geography. I was surprised it was so small, as one can look right across it, but I believe it is inclined to be an optical illusion. All around from its shores rise these high mountains which in any case could be seen for miles and miles. Of course the atmosphere is very clear, so it must be deceptive. On the left bank one can see Tiberias tucked away on the sea shore and surrounded with mountains.

Shortly after leaving Samak one crosses the Jordan on a high steel girder bridge, the river rushing in torrents along the rocky

bed full of boulders. Very soon one crosses the river again on a wooden bridge. The original steel one was blown up by Johnnie Turk, the boys have temporarily erected a massive wooden structure. The river is rushing madly on, something like 50 feet below, and one can hear the woodwork creaking as the train slowly rolls over, slower than walking pace. This bridge, known as "Vancouver Bridge", denotes one's lowest altitude in feet below sea level, for after this one begins climbing on a ledge on the rocky hillside, keeping about 30 feet above the rushing river. The curves are simply tremendous and it is wonderful how a train can keep on rushing along without even a few feet of straight. Up we climb alongside the river with vertical sides of rock, until we notice on the hill the other side of the valley a climbing ledge along which we shall shortly be climbing in exactly the reverse direction to that we are going now.



Haifa from the R.O.D. Billet. Locos: 0-10-OT 2435 and (possibly) 2-8-OT 300 (rebuilt 1909 from Jung 2-8-0 71).  
(Photo: Ron Garraway; Garraway Collection No. 26.)



Between Afuleh and Samakh, on the descent into the Jordan Valley.  
(Photo: Ron Garraway; Garraway Collection No. 22).

Soon after about another mile we cross a viaduct like a horse-shoe which reverses our direction, but transfers us from one hill side to another, and now we leave the river in the depths below and begin to climb over the Lebanon Mountains. It is simply wonderful how any engine can pull itself, let alone a train, up these hills, as it is so steep and all the time in and out, according to the irregularities of the mountain side. It is simply a ledge cut in an almost vertical side, just wide enough for one train on a single line to pass. On the hill side of the carriage is the cut ledge of the rock, right up against the window, and on the other one looks almost vertically down 4 - 500 feet on a rushing mountain torrent. Should anything happen, it would of course mean instant death, for if the train should break away it would not mean many seconds before its speed was too great to manage the curves, and a derailment - well the ledge is so narrow there is only room for the train on the rails, and no room if it comes off ! One quite grasps the side of the compartment at times looking down these awful heights, and then occasionally seeing on the opposite hill the ledge you are shortly to traverse. Twice one is performing this horseshoe bend, climbing up the side of one hill, until the valley is sufficiently narrow, then round one swings over a viaduct and back again along the valley on the opposite hill. At one time, about six months ago, one of our engines was going up the hill light, when the tender broke away and went flying down the hill, over the top, and crashed into the depths below. As we passed, we could see it lying about 500 feet below us, with the bogie wheels torn off and hanging over the precipice !

Well I cannot write any more now about this wonderful climb through the valley, but we will assume we are nearly at the top of the mountain. There was a little station we stopped at, and about a mile further on was a beautiful waterfall, the water falling from above our heads, under a bridge on the ledge and down to the depths below. I "flashed" my Arabic and asked the driver to go slowly so I could take a photo, and the old chap was good enough to almost stop the train, so I shall be anxious to see the result, but I am rather doubtful.


As one eventually emerges from the climb up the valley, you enter a table land, right on top of the Lebanon Mountains. This is apparently a stud farm for camels, as there are literally millions. The train keeps flying along and still for miles and miles one sees nothing but camels, big camels, baby camels and camels of all sorts. We are now in the country belonging to the King of the Hedjaz, and his troops are everywhere, armed to the teeth, also all the Bedouins simply bristle with ammunition, knives etc., and look quite imposing ! One station one passes on this table land has a good deal of Turkish Railway stock and rails badly damaged, evidence of rather a successful attack where the Hedjaz troops cut the line and cut off Johnnie's retreat in the final stint. Otherwise there is nothing of particular interest to note, simply a flat table land surrounded with still higher peaks.

We arrived at Deraa about 5.30, and just before reaching the station, we had a fine view of the snow topped Mt. Lebanon in the distance, so you can guess the heights we were getting to, for snow in this hot climate, but of course that was decidedly higher than we were, although we had been all the afternoon climbing ! Deraa is simply an Arab village, occupied by the Hedjaz people with due force, but rather an important place as a railway centre, marking the end of the section Haifa - Deraa. Here our worthy great mountain climber came off, and another enormous engine coupled up at the back, and at 6 o'clock we started off backwards and in the opposite direction across the plain to Damascus. The sunset behind the snow-topped mountains of Lebanon was a sight for the gods. It was simply beautiful, and then almost instantaneously, as it were in true eastern fashion, the

wonders of the day faded away and everything became dark. We stretched ourselves on the seats, and in about half a minute were dreaming of the day's wonders, unconsciously speeding towards Damascus.

A lad in the train gave Jock and me a call, and we got up in time to see the lights of Damascus in the distance. It was 10.30 when we arrived, so we went and spent the night in the rest camp at the end of the station. Some of the wandering Bedouins fired shots at the train before entering the station. I can't quite make out their reason, as it is a practice that has caused some anxiety for some time, but apparently they still indulge in the pastime. We slept like tops again all night, although we were rather cold. Jock and I had to sleep together, so as to use both our blankets and keep each other warm. It is awful how we feel the cold now. I quite dread the winter at home, but there, I suppose I shall get climatized to it, in the same way I got climatized to the heat.

We had to make an early start next morning, as our train left at a station at the other end of the town at 7.45. We had a wash in a stream running through the street, and then went into the town for breakfast. We had a jolly fine meal, and paid a jolly fine price, but that latter is usual out here !!!

Our next journey was the last stage, and by the end of the day we were to be in Beirut. The scenery as one leaves Damascus is simply exquisite. Water gushing out of the rocks everywhere, not in streams here and there, but a continuous trickle everywhere, with every now and again a little water-fall. This line is very similar to the others for the incessant winding along valleys on the mountain side, but it is not so cliff-like and precipitous. It is certainly a land of wealth. Beautiful clear water in abundance, orchards everywhere with every class of fruit, and in fact the whole place seems overflowing with life for the vegetable world, and of course the ground is cultivated everywhere. After one has been slowly but steadily climbing from Damascus, one comes to a decline after about one hour. There is a steep descent through mountain crags into a fertile plain below, where fruit and vegetation is abundant again. After crossing this plain, one climbs over a small set of mountains or hills this time, all rocky and volcanic in nature, with great boulders everywhere, and then again one descends into an enormous fertile plain, surrounded with enormous mountains. Rayak is the most important station one stops at in this plain, and then you go on about a quarter of an hour to Molakka, where the engine is taken off and changed for a lovely little mountain-climbing rack engine. The hills are so steep that you see an engine could not hold on to the rails without slipping, so underneath the engine is another powerful engine driving a cog wheel which engages on a rack or a centre rail with teeth in it like this: 

Molakka is a station rather remarkable for its inhabitants, and a more cosmopolitan set it would be hard to find ! It is rather renowned for the beauty of its women folk, a claim it is more than justified in being proud of.

By this time we have left Molakka a few miles behind and are beginning to wander at the foot of an enormous range of mountains of 10,000 feet high, whose peaks are continually being enshrouded by passing white clouds. Looking across that wonderful plain lying in a flat fertile valley surrounded by most majestic ranges of mountains, we see Mt. Hermon, the highest peak in the Lebanon Mountains, with its crest and sides all covered with snow, whilst we are slowly melting and glad of any stray breeze that comes along. Our train is now upon an incline that would make one feel tired to walk up, and although the engine is moving along on full power, yet our progress is only about walking pace and one can alight to pick flowers and then run after to catch the train !

Thus we climb for about two hours, never straight, but continually winding in and out, with the valley beneath gradually becoming further and further below, and yet the peaks seem just as high as ever. There are about three stations on the way up, that one halts in for 5 or 10 minutes to give the engine a bit of a rest and replenish water supplies. By the time one reaches the second station, you are glad to change shirtsleeves for a tunic, and the air becomes quite brisk.

The summit is just like a pointed top, only a small station and about a train's length of flat. We are now over 9,000 feet above sea level, just catching the little clouds as they come fleecing along. It was wonderful, too beautiful to describe, and then as soon as the train starts a most thrilling and marvellous descent, a still more wonderful panorama is unveiled before one. Beirut is lying in the valley 9,000 feet below, and one can see along the sea coast for miles and miles, all the various little bays, and villages dotted along at various points along the coast and again that rich blue carpet of the oriental Mediterranean, for indeed we are now right in the Orient. One looks below from carriage window, down sides too steep to climb, with drops of anything from 400 - 500 ft., the sides of which are clothed with rich vegetation, trees etc. dotted amongst a rocky and almost volcanic surface. The descent is so steep that one has to pass two halting stations or reversing stations, making one's descent like this:



After about 2 hours one is at last on level ground speeding along by the sea coast and harbour. The train travels along a sort of pier built on the water's edge, you seem to be skirting the coastal side of Beirut, right past the harbour up to the quays.

We arrived at the quay station, which consists of a station building somewhere beside the quays, the rest being simply a train in the middle of a main street, we proceeded to the Y.M.C.A. and were given a most cordial welcome and a four-course dinner - the nicest dinner I've tasted for many a long day. There were 6 of us in the bed room - quite a large room with a balcony - and our beds consisted of stretchers, but we were most comfortable. One is not allowed out in town after sundown, unless armed and in parties of not less than 2, on account of a good deal of unrest and dissatisfaction amongst the various creeds and religions over the dividing of the spoils. Some want British rule, some French and some American, but more of this when I get home!

The Y.M.C.A. is a large house built out in the sea on a rock with water on three sides. In the front is a delightful concrete terrace with lounges on it, and here we spent the evenings, enjoying the cool sea breeze and quietude after a day of excitement and pleasure. The following morning we were provided with an excellent breakfast, and then strolled through the town and caught a tram to the pine forests, which are rather famous and beautiful. After a short stroll through these forests we returned and rambled about the town until dinner time. During the afternoon I visited the embarkation offices to try and book a passage to Haifa on a lighter which used to sail daily, but unfortunately the service had been discontinued about a fortnight before we arrived, so we had to do the return journey by rail. The only drawback to this was that our return took two days, instead of one by sea, and shortened our time at Jerusalem.

I took some photos from the harbour breakwater, where I was able to approach quite close to a French gunboat lying at anchor. There is still visible above the water a Turkish cruiser which was sunk by the Turks right in the fair-way just before the arrival of the British. I said "sunk" but should have said "Scuttled".



On the following morning we had an early departure as our train left at 7.15. The Y.M. provided us with a ripping breakfast of poached eggs etc. etc. at 6.30, and two packets of sandwiches for the journey. At the station you never saw such a sight in all your life. It was like the picture postcards of the last train to Southend !! People on the roofs, on the butiers, on the side steps and anywhere possible to lodge. Simply a survival of the fittest, and the foreign custom out here of men first, women after carried out to perfection. It made our blood boil and you would have laughed to see Jock and myself using our British influence and by mere force compelling the men to give way. We said our compartment was reserved for troops, and only allowed two soldiers besides ourselves in the compartment !! However about 5 mins. before the train departed there were standing close to our compartment two men with their wives all duly veiled so as none could see their faces, and with them a tiny baby, and a little girl of about 3 - 4 years. Little girls like this as you know are a weakness of mine, and she was such a sweet little child, that we relaxed our resolution and invited the party in. We might have been V.C.s returning home (Victoria Cross holders), so great was their gratitude, and it was quite pathetic to see their relief. Of course, as soon as the door opened there was a rush of men, but suffice it to say not one entered, save of course the two fathers. The worst of it was that we could only play with the girl, but couldn't speak. Our Arabic was too childish, our French too ungrammatical, and English she hadn't tackled !

Now I won't burden you with details of the voyage back, as of course the route and scenery were the same, but I must confess I was a bit "windy" once or twice on the descent from the mountains as I thought he went rather too fast round some of the curves, when you look straight below you for about 4-500', it made one hold tight ! At one part of the journey we had some rather nice companions who spoke English perfectly, in fact visited England every year. They were evidently rather well-to-do people and made the journey most interesting. I am not quite sure of the Biblical story, although we had it in the lessons on the Sunday before our departure. Something about a King of Syria with leprosy told to bathe in the Jordan seven times. He replied "Are not Parpah and ... rivers of Damascus better than the Jordan..." Well these people were pointing out to us the sources of these two rivers and the rivers themselves.

[Editor's note: The reference is to 2 Kings 5:12, when Naaman refers to "Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus".]

We arrived back at Damascus at 4.50 and wandered all over the town looking for a hotel. It is a perfect scandal how all the hotels everywhere are out of bounds to N.C.O.'s and men whilst officers can flaunt in idle wastefulness and extravagance at Government expense. However a very jolly English girl - apparently the daughter of a general or someone of importance - saw our plight and directed us to the one and only hotel in bounds, where we settled down for the night. Damascus is another town one has to be very careful in, especially after dark, and being the capital of the Hedjaz domain is full of their troops, who guard their town very jealously and who regard with some suspicion and anxiety British troops. However the following morning we made another early start catching our train at 7.45.

On this train in a "special saloon" at the back was one of the Hedjaz princes, who was the means of causing us much amusement on the journey - not himself but the attentions paid to him, and you never saw anything so funny in your life, but more of this anon.

Haita was reached once again about 4pm. and here we decided to remain over until Monday. On Sunday morning we rambled through the town and German Colony, seeing all the sights, after another delightful bathe. In the afternoon we had another bathe and then got the motor for another ride up Mount Carmel, but this time we went



further along the hill where the view was simply exquisite on account of the height above the sea and the steepness of the sides. It is simply like an enormous Cape, and as we drove along the road on top, we looked down on either side on the sea. Haifa lay directly below us, and Acre across the Bay, whereas the panorama was more like a geography map. You could trace rivers almost from their sources and follow them in their winding valleys down to the sea. On top of this hill is a large German observatory, but this we did not go in. There is also a large "naval" gun mounted by the Germans, and my word what a range for protection, with all those miles of sea coast below, and overlooking all those miles of country. There are also the concrete foundations of another gun complete, but unfortunately for them, our boys arrived before they had time to assemble it. A monument erected to the Kaiser is also lying there in ruins, being blown to pieces in disgust by our boys ! When the Kaiser visited Syria and Palestine he has left his pompous mark everywhere, even to the extent of erecting a special pier at which to land.

...We left Haifa at 8 o'clock on the Monday and arrived at Jerusalem about 3.30. The journey is a wonderful journey too, but after such wonderful sights of the past journey it is rather uninteresting. It is much the same on a small scale, a winding railway following a valley along the side of a hill or hills, but the hills are small compared to the others, which were mountains. On arrival at Jerusalem we drove in state to a hotel, and after a good clean-up and some dinner strolled through the City, getting a general idea and spending a good deal of time with souvenirs. On Tuesday morning we joined the Y.M.C.A. party and visited the outside of the City, Calvary, the Holy Sepulchre, Garden of Gethsemane. The tomb of Mary Magdalene and all the Biblical wonders concerned with Jerusalem without. Incidentally you may remember "There is a green hill far away etc." and here our morning tour ended. In the afternoon we got a gharry and went to Bethlehem, visiting the manger and all the wonderful relics concerned with the birth of Christ.

The following morning we visited inside the city, The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the wonders inside. The Mosque of Omar is also a wonderful Mosque and is built in part of the remains of Solomon's Temple, and I believe supposed to have been built on the original site. The various customs and dresses of the different religions are most quaint and strange.

We left Jerusalem at 11 o'clock on Wednesday morning and arrived at Ludd about 1.30, so we went and found some of our chums there, and found a place to put our kit and get a wash. The train for Kantara should have left at 11 o'clock at night but was two hours late, so we spent our time on the station talking to a padre stationed at Jerusalem and a most interesting talk we had with him too."

[Editor's note: I have done a small amount of "editing" of style, but left most of the text as written; I have decided to retain most (not all) of the sightseeing descriptions as I personally found them so vivid and fascinating, reflecting a brief period when few civilian travellers or tourists visited the area that was in the process of great changes - relics of the recent fighting, new graves, lines under new operators and occupation, etc. The Jerusalem line would have been standard gauge at this time (this work being finished 15th. June 1918). The temporary "Vancouver Bridge" near Samak (his spelling) would have been either the 2nd. or 3rd. Yarmuk bridge, both destroyed on 26th. September 1918 and rebuilt, one by Royal Engineers and one by Australian troops, by 26th. October. (Tourret: "Hedjaz Rly.", p. 81). The insight into the pleasures and perils of military life is valuable - and have Beirut or Damascus become any more safe in the last 70 years ?]

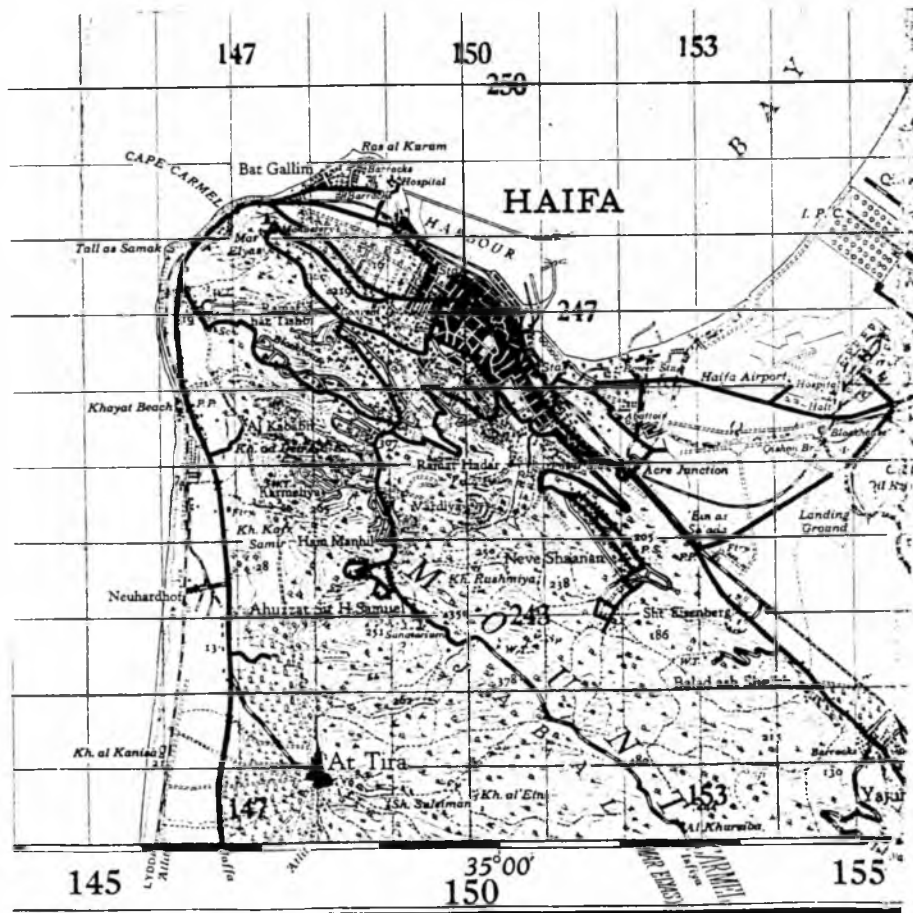
16.

REME WORKSHOPS IN THE 1940's. By W. Collingwood of Harlow.

I am indebted to Mr. Collingwood for several snapshots of PR trains in 1946, taken at Khayat Beach - a little to the North of what is now known as "Hof HaCarmel" - and a contemporary map "acquired after an exercise near the Lebanon border". He writes:

"The REME ("Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers") workshop at Khayat was HQ 3 Base W/S (i.e. Workshop). On the East side of the main road was the H.Q. and accommodation camp; it is now a burial ground and I believe there is also a British army burial ground there. The No. 1 sub W/S was on the sea side of the road, and repaired and overhauled Bedford and Chevrolet engines and back axles, motor bikes and electrical equipment. (I think it is now an Israeli army depot). There were other buildings between it and the sea, and a railway siding ran into the W/S to the engine shop, where the crated engines were loaded and unloaded. No. 2 sub W/S was at Neuhardhof and the map shows the sidings there (that is where the rail armoured cars were modified). This W/S repaired bulldozers, earth movers and heavy equipment. No. 3 sub W/S was at the Levant Fair site at Tel Aviv and No. 4 sub W/S at Motzkin (near Qiryat Motzkin North of Haifa)."

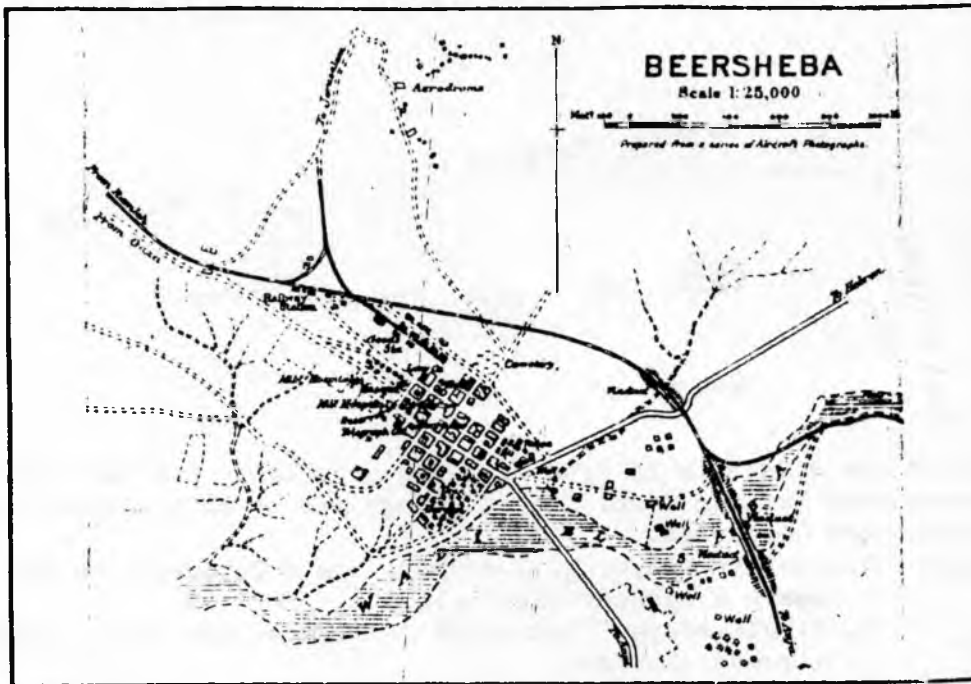
The armoured cars referred to were a pair of back-to-back rail-wheel fitted armoured vehicles, seen in 1947 preceding troop trains through Ras-el-Ain in 1947. These may be the same as those pictured in Plate 55, p. 65, of "The Railways of Palestine and Israel", though these are described as being built at Qishon in the late 1930's on Ford V8 chassis.



SCALE 1:100,000

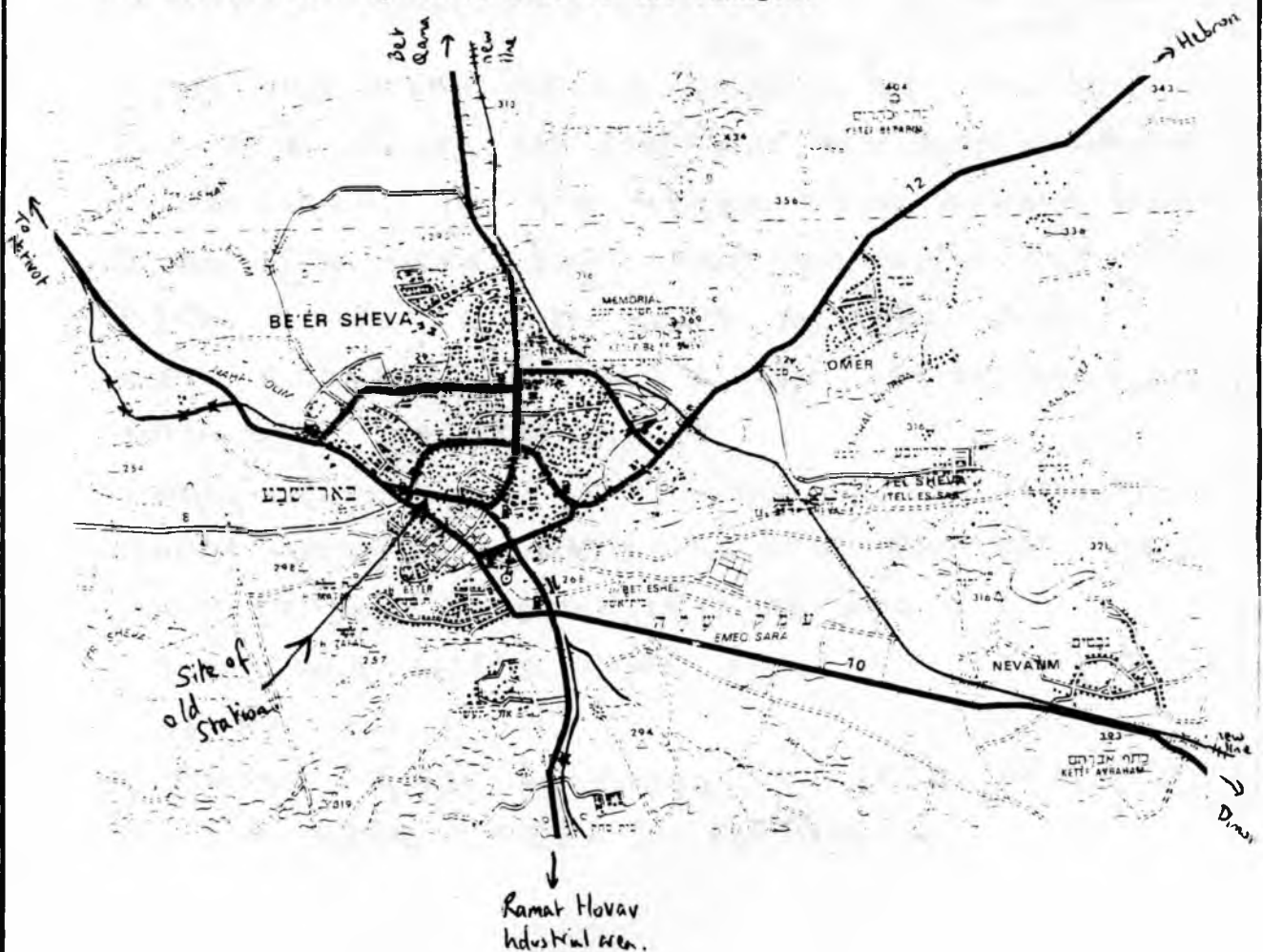
17. BEERSHEBA : THEN AND NOW.

The plan below is taken from an article "Air Photographs by First World War Pilots in Eretz Yisrael", by Dov Gavish, in "Kathedra", No. VII, April 1978, p.111.

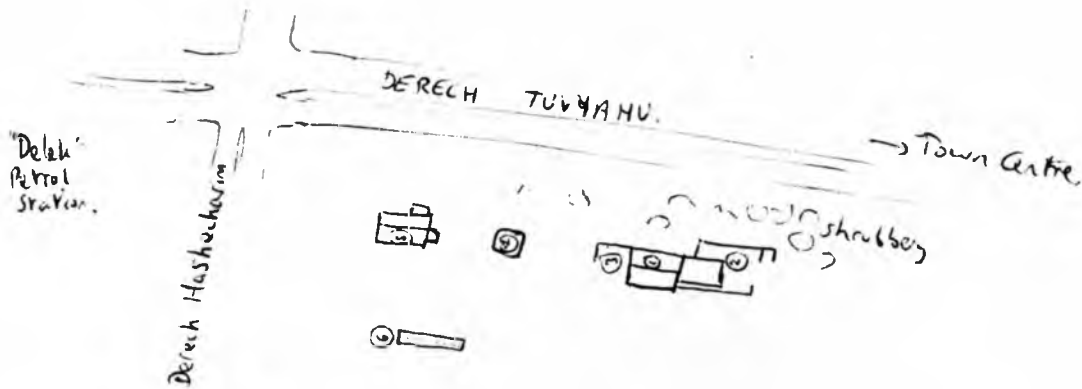


It clearly shows the route of the Turkish military railway at some point between 1916 and 1918. The spot marked "Cemetery" is now, approximately, the site of the Egged bus station. The viaduct over the "Wadi el Saba" still stands, disused, with only one span missing. The Railway Station also stands - see below - and the embankment near the Hebron Road is also still discernible.

The modern O.S. map shows some of the changes:



Old (Turkish) Station at Beer Sheva. (Not to Scale; visited and drawn 9/3/89);



The station now stands in an area of waste scrubland, not far from the dual-carriageway road towards Gaza. The buildings are of solid stone construction, and in very good condition.

- Notes:
1. Station building. 2-storey. Now a Cultural Centre, and bears a plaque. (See below).
  2. Single-storey flat-roofed extension and what appears to be a goods platform.
  3. Single-storey flat-roofed extension.
  4. Base of a Water-tower. Bears painted number "6".
  5. Station house. 2-storey. Bears painted number "7". Now the Headquarters of the Society for the Protection of the Negev, and a Field School.
  6. An "Esslingen" railcar trailer coach, "grounded", used as a classroom.

Plaque: By the door of the station is a metal plaque with the following inscription:

ע"מ לכרון  
 יתן לה שימש כתחנה הרכבת התורכית בקו המסילה  
 צמח- עפולה- טול-כרם- ואבי ציור- באר שבע שנתק ב- 1915-10-30  
 המסילה והתחנה נתנו בימי מלחמת העולם הראשונה להעברת  
 איסות וציוד מנחל אסנין. בבאר-שבע מוקמה המקדש של  
 הציב התורכי בנסיונו לכבוש את תחנת סולא  
 בעיר התלבושה קהילה יהודית קטנה ובעילה שיתקמה  
 התל מנה 1900 עד 1928-8-29  
 במקום לה, ביום ב' כ"א בטבת תרע"ד 15.1.1917  
 נהרלו מהפצצת מטוסים בריטיים ששה- עשר יבודים,  
 מבני הישוב בירושלים וביפו-תל-אביב.  
 ששה מהם קבורים בקבר אחים בבית העלמין העתיק  
 של באר-שבע.  
 במותם קידשו את המקום. יהי לכרם ברוך  
 כ"א בטבת התשמ"ל 22.1.1987

My rough translation of this plaque reads:

"This building was used as the Turkish military railway station on the railway line Tzemach - Afula - Tul Karem - Wadi Tzarar - Beer Sheva, that was opened/dedicated on 30/10/1915. The line and the station were built in the days of the First World War to transport troops and supplies from Tzemach to Sinai. Beer Sheva was the site of the HQ of the Turkish Army in its campaign to conquer the Suez Canal.

In the developing town was a small active Jewish community, that originated at the beginning of the 1900's and lasted to 29/3/1928.

At this place, on Monday the 21st. Tevet 5474, 15/1/1917, 16 Jews, members of the Yishuv of Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv-Jaffa were killed in a British air raid. Seven of them are buried in a communal grave in the old cemetery of Beer Sheva. By their death they sanctified God. (lit. "The Place"). May their Memory be blessed. 21st. Tevet 1987." (i.e. the 70th. anniversary, according to the Jewish calendar, of the incident).

The Turkish line was in fact built from Massoudieh (later called Sebastie - the station buildings still stand) on the Afule - Nablus branch. Work started on 15/1/15 (Cotterell, p.14) down to the plain at Tulkarm, thence southwards to Lydda, where it joined the Jaffa-Jerusalem route (plundered for track materials) as far as Wadi Sarar, thence diverged southwards through the wilderness to Beer Sheva and eventually as far as Kusseima, in the middle of nowhere. Despite the rush it was well-built - there is still a large and near-complete 13 arch (? - two missing) and a four-arch viaduct at Beer Sheba, and numerous culverts and embankments visible from the road. The route between Lydda and Tulkarm was later utilised by the British for their standard-gauge line, but not a lot of the Wadi Sarar - Beersheba route was reused by the Israelis for their new line to the Negev. (Incidentally, the old route is still visible crossing the main road from Qiryat Gat to Beer-Sheba at km.217.8; the road is dual-carriageway at this point).

The British, as part of their campaign, built a standard-gauge line from Rafah towards Beer Sheba (59½ km - Cotterell p.26) and after the area had been captured the old Turkish line was also relaid to standard-gauge, in May-July 1918. For a few short months an intensive service was worked, using the Rafah - Rehovot - Lydda route one way and the Rafah - Wadi Sarar - Lydda route the other way. (The junction with the line to Beer Sheba was known as Irgeig, and is not far from the modern town of Netivot). After October 1918 the line between Irgeig and Wadi Sarar was lifted, and Beer Sheva was then served by a straggling branch from Rafah, with a very infrequent service that was finally withdrawn in 1927. The narrow-gauge rails that still stretched, unused, from Beer Sheva to Kusseima had been lifted in 1924.

It is therefore safe to assume that the Palestine Railways style of numbering of buildings dates from the 1918 - 1927 period. Beer Sheva remained a slumbering backwater for almost three more decades.

Note: according to Cotterell the standard-gauge line from Rafah reached Beer Sheva on 3/5/18, and the (or a) British air raid on the station took place in March 1917.(p.18).

Apart from the modern station and the remains of the old station, other railway relics in the area include the embankment curving towards the Hebron road; a goods van body (painted orange and white) near the North end of the shorter viaduct; three 25T van bodies in a factory area south of the Dimona road just past the crossroads with Road 40 to Ramat Hovav (km. 174), and five van bodies (I think 25T type) on the East side of the Hebron road, between the bridge over the modern railway and the town centre.

The Esslingen coach at the old station site is painted in two-tone blue livery, with faded red roof, but bears no identification marks.

N.B. At the Public Works Dept. on Ishmael Street are preserved: an Aveling "Invicta" road roller and an ancient Caterpillar Scraper, with a plate: "Reg. U.S.Pat.Off. 2B 1323". (Noted 13/7/82).

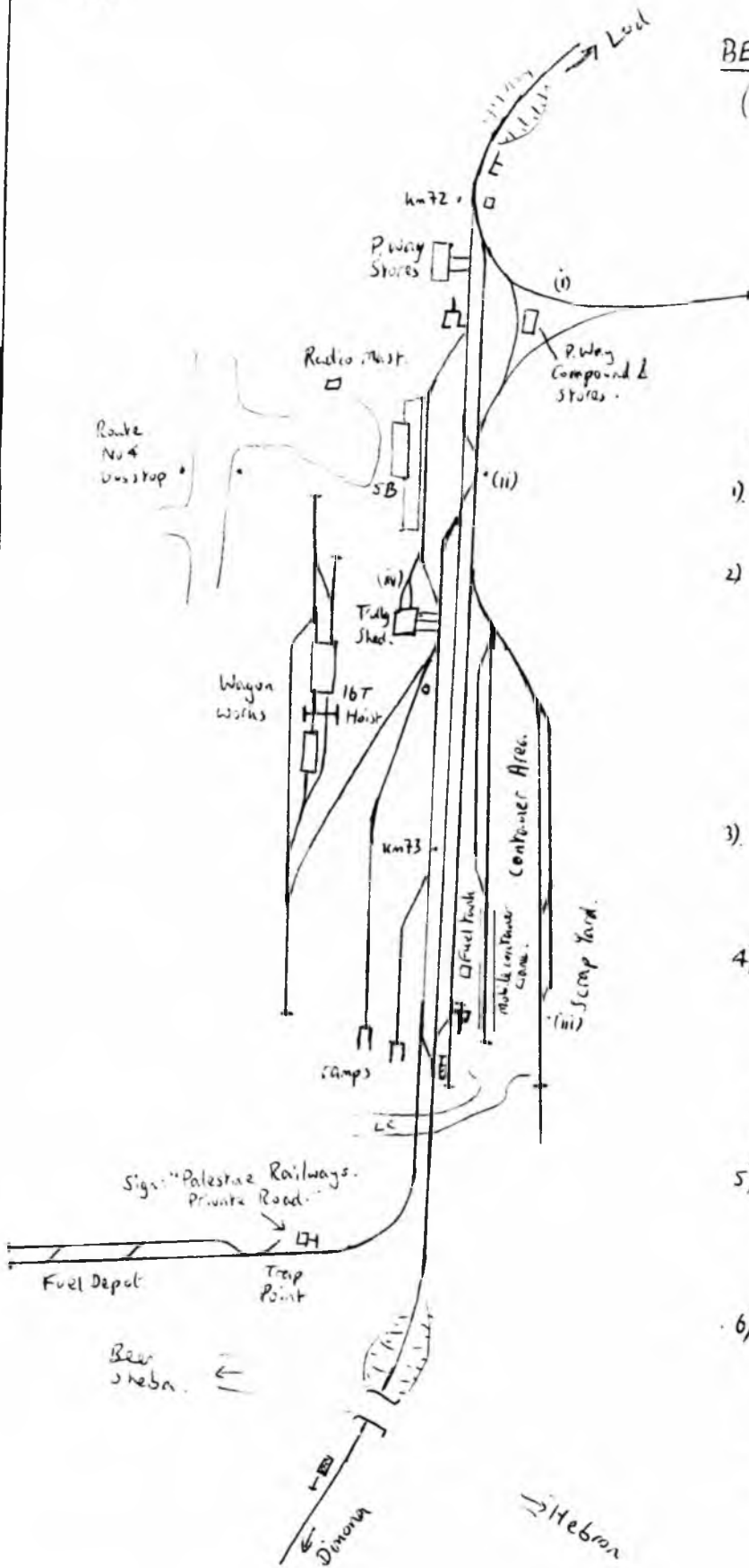


18.

## BEER SHEBA.

(Not to Scale)

Drawn July 1981.



### NOTES

- 1) Passenger facilities seem to be an afterthought!
- 2) Three semaphore signals - two from Northern approach (one double-wheel post, one bracket); one from Southern approach: double-arm and bracket. No Northbound starter signal. Southern end - mostly colour-light.
- 3) No signal box. All points & signals appear to be worked locally - mostly single-lever S.F.'s.
- 4) Container Area includes a gantry on tyres; turnac path; storage area; transfer area for lorries from Eilat (including lorry-mounted container-grab-hoist)
- 5) Station building still used as radio-control post & for mess purposes. Buffer closed.
- 6) Miscellaneous materials include:
  - (i). Rail marked "Bochum 1954".
  - (ii). Point lever marked "Racor Patent".
  - (iii). Point lever marked "Howrah".
  - (iv). Rail marked "Illinois U.S.A. 7590. 1976".

19. Further Excerpts from the Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statements: Relating to the Beirut-Damascus line, the Hauran line (to Muzeirib), lines towards the North of Syria and the Hedjaz line.

(Editor's Note: It is hard to separate these references, since in several cases a traveller to the Damascus area has sent a report covering more than one line.)

April 1895. p.162. In an article entitled "A Journey in the Hauran", by Rev. E. Ewing; here, in discussion with a Beduin Sheikh:

"The proposed railway from the coast to Damascus has caused a flutter of anxiety in many of the tents of Ishmael. The coming of the Circassians was a small affair compared with what is threatened by the advent of the iron horse, which is to fill with sounds of life and industry the vast fertile solitudes, whose shrill scream is to waken the echoes in many a valley where silence has reigned for centuries. Just what the railway is, only a few of them have some dim apprehension, but all have a hazy notion that it means the final expulsion of the Arab from their ancestral wilds; either this or they will have to break with the long tradition of their people, and in simple self-preservation turn to more settled ways. Against either alternative the Arab soul rises in revolt, and no one need wonder if in their deliberate judgement the introduction of the railway spells "ruin to the country".

The article continues in October 1895, p.358:

"A little to the eastward of the village I saw a number of tents, and beyond the tents a scene of bustle and activity, most unoriental in its character. The tents belonged to the engineers who had charge of the construction of the tramway from Damascus into the Hauran. In the course of their work they had reached Es Şanamein, ("The Two Idols"), and the low embankment which here was necessary, a troop of native workers, under European supervision, were throwing up in great style. I found the chief in command, the Mudir, as the Arabs called him, a young Belgian - a fine, hospitable fellow, as much delighted to meet a new face from the west as I was to see a representative of the civilisation in these wilds. I had hoped to reach Khabab that evening, but he would not hear of our going further.....

The rest of the afternoon passed pleasantly, inspecting the works, and more especially a bridge, which was to span the wady, south of the town, just below the ancient Roman bridge which has outlived so many centuries and bids fair, though sadly dilapidated, to survive many more modern structures. The metals were laid as far as Ghubâghib, and a locomotive and a number of wagons having been at work for some time the people were beginning to realise some of the blessings of railways. Indeed, they had already a few accidents to boast of; and no sham affairs either, for several lives had been lost.

The line has now been completed as far as Mezeirîb, and opened only, however, for goods traffic. Still, if it is properly gone about, travellers may arrange for a trip into the Hauran from Damascus, and thus see, in brief time, and at little expense, what not long ago would have cost a considerable amount of both. The line from Haifa will also open up a country of very great interest, but as yet very little progress has been made with it."

The same issue, p.298, notes: "The narrow-gauge railway between Beyrout and Damascus has been opened. On the slopes of the Lebanon the cog-wheel system is employed. Beyond Zahleh the line crosses the Beka'a, ascends the valley Yafûfa, and proceeds by Zebadani and the Valley of the Barada. The journey at present occupies as much as eight hours; it is worked by the French company, who own the Damascus road."

In April 1898, p.72, is a letter by Dr. Masterman from Damascus: Dated 3rd.Fe

"We have had the most extraordinary weather here of late. For seven days we received no post, through the railway line being completely blocked with snow in the Lebanon. One train from Beyrout was almost buried, and the passengers suffered the greatest privations. It took upwards of 500 men seven days' hard work to dig out the train, and get the line clear again.

You will also be interested to hear that the extension of the line from Beirut to Tripoli is being rapidly pushed on. The new line will start from the same railway station as the Damascus one. I believe it now reaches nearly half-way to Tripoli. The railway here has just changed hands, the original company having found it impossible to work it on the expensive lines on which



it was begun. It is now to be worked much more cheaply; especially is reduction to be made in the expenses of the French staff, who have so far been receiving very large salaries in proportion to the smallness of the railway. The Hauran trains now run only three days a week".

In January 1899, p.51, Mark Sykes esq. describes "A Journey East of Jebel ed-Druse", during which he encountered the Haj pilgrimage, consisting of at least 10,000 civilians, a procession four miles long, protected by 500 mounted infantry and a mountain battery. On p.55: "Two days later I reached Damascus, now troubled by a railway and other European abominations."

In July 1900, p.194, Conrad Schick communicated:

"It is said that an order has been issued by the Sultan for a line of telegraph to be erected between Es Salt and Mecca, and that the railway is to be continued from Mezairib to Akaba and Mecca. The work is to be done by soldiers."

The October 1901 issue, p.631, includes an article by George Adam Smith, the famous geographer of this region, entitled "Notes of a Journey through the Hauran".

"Sheikh Miskīn (pronounced usually "'s Miskīn") appears to have grown much since I was here in 1891. There was a good deal of goods traffic - grain going out, timber and cloth coming in at the railway station, which is the station not only for el-Merkez (centre of government for the Hauran) but for most of the villages between the railway and the Lejā."

April 1902, p.169, includes an account of "German Excavations at Ba'albek" by F.C. Bliss - a thorough account of a thorough excavation on Teutonic lines, and the first reference I have come across to a "contractor's railway", though perhaps others were used in railway construction:

"The work of removing so great an amount of debris has been facilitated by the use of a small railway with trucks.....One line of rails was laid through the vaults, through which the enclosure is usually approached...."

p.170: "The branch line from the Beirūt - Damascus railway to Ḥoms and Hamath will have its junction at the mouth of the Wady Yaḥfāfeh, a gorge of the Antilibanus, the station being Rayāḳ, on the eastern edge of the plain. Work is progressing rapidly; trains as far as Ba'albek are promised for about Easter, and the line will be opened as far as Hamath in the autumn. It is to be a full-gauge railway, in contrast to the narrow-gauge line from Beirūt to Damascus. The opening of the line will greatly facilitate the trip to Palmyra, as the journey from Beirūt to Ḥoms may be made in one day, and Palmyra is easily accessible by a carriage ride over the plains which stretch between it and Ḥoms."

By July 1902, Dr. Masterman was writing:(p.299f):

"The passenger traffic on the Damascus to Mezeirib Railway is so small that now trains are run only four days a week - on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays - and not, as at first, daily.

There is much activity at Mezeirib connected with the Damascus to Mecca Railway. This line is now run as a direct continuation of the French line to Mezeirib, but I understand the Turkish authorities have not been able yet to come to terms with the French company for the purchase of their line, and so are making an independent line from Damascus. The new line is complete for several miles, we saw it sweeping away to the east of us as we followed the Haj road on our way to el-Husn. A friend of mine from Ammān told me when I was at Jerash that the line is fast nearing completion near that place. For tourists &c, this line will open up a most interesting part of the country, bringing the wonderful ruins of M'shitta and Ammān within a few hours of Damascus."

By July 1903 other effects of the railway were making themselves felt, as seen in notes on the cholera epidemic of 1902: (p.99).

"Ammān, where the Damascus-Mecca railhead now is, was the immediate centre ...and..., in a manifest way by means of railway workmen from the railway, Damascus".

p.107 notes that both road and rail communications were restricted by quarantine cordons.

The July 1904 issue has a report on the Mecca railway, p.188, and on p.298: "Four hundred and seventy-two kilometres of the Damascus-Mecca Railway is now open for traffic".

April 1905, p.91f, gives a taste of the future:

"The Damascus-Mecca railway is being pushed on, and has already been utilised

for the transport of troops. The Reserves called out in Southern Palestine were assembled at Jerusalem, and marched to Amman, where they were entrained for Ma'an. Thence they marched to Akabah, and embarked for Yemen. The members of the railway administration are all Moslems."

"According to French papers, the Porte have approved the construction of a railway from Hamah to Aleppo by a French company. This will place Aleppo in a direct railway communication with Beirut."

The October 1905 issue includes, p.286f, the AGM speech of Dr. George Adam Smith:

"There is an immense increase there (i.e. in Moab) of the Circassian population brought in by the Turks with the view of meeting the Beduin and cultivating the land. They are building as the Beduin did not build, and they are pulling.....large tracts of ruins to pieces. The railway planned right down towards the Gulf of Akabah from Damascus, the Turkish Railway, has been opened as far as opposite the South end of the Dead Sea. When I was there last year the railway was bringing new settlers, keen to build and use the old ruins...."

A rueful comment from a keen antiquarian.

I shall end this series of excerpts with a tribute to the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund from the remarks of Dr. William Wright at the Fund's 1986 AGM:

"You have made vast changes in the maps of the Bible lands. When I went to Palestine about thirty years ago, the rivers ran up and down hills in the most reckless manner.....Those were the days when people believed that the Bible came down from heaven bound in calf."

Note: I have received requests from readers to standardise transliteration of Hebrew and Arabic place names. I can see the attractiveness and logic of this - the trouble is that the sources I use all employ different renditions and sometimes the variety adds to the flavour of different periods. Dr. Masterman, in his 1898 letter, uses two spellings for Beirut/Beyruth at the same time ! So - no promises.

## 20. The Whitcomb Diesels.

The USATC introduced a class of bo-bo centre-cab diesels for use in the Middle East theatre of war - details in Paul Cotterell's book - though a lot of them seemed to spend their time in store at Azzib (now Betzet). Later they spread to North Africa and several European countries - the Nederlands Spoorwegen had some, I think; certainly "Philotrains" make a marvellous but expensive HO model of NS No. 2004. I have even seen a short film-clip of something like a Whitcomb diesel on the narrow gauge in Lebanon - and I wasn't drunk at the time.

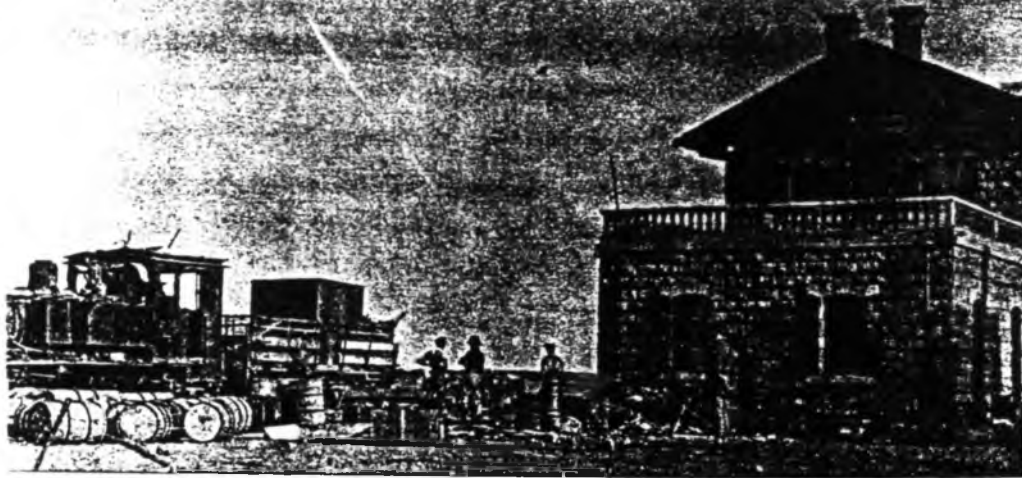
This photo, from "Rail" Magazine, No. 92, March 1989, p.28, does not show a Whitcomb but, as the caption says, an early Austrian diesel that must have been influenced by the American locos.



Introduced as early as 1952, No.2045.10 was one of a class of 20 diesel electric Bo-Bos built in Austria for secondary services. They used two SGP 12-cylinder vee engines of the type used on ÖBB diesel hydraulic railcars. This one was heading a train from Bruck Mur to Graz in September, 1958. Thirty years on, the class is still in regular use.

21.

BRITISH OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH.



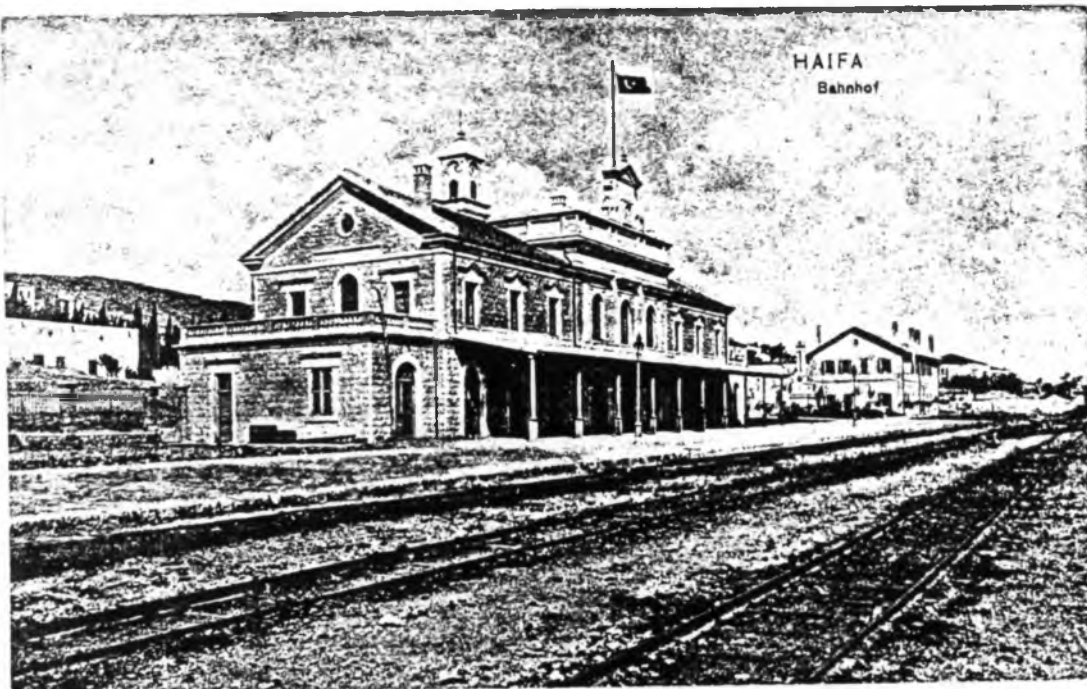
Reid & Son (Egypt),  
Official Publishers.

H.4.—Tul-Keram Station: Captured engines  
and material.

P.O. Box 1481,  
Cairo.

My thanks to David Pearlman of London - a famous collector of ancient postcards - for this interesting shot of Tul-Keram (Tulkarm) on or around, I presume, 20th. September 1918 (Tourret p. 79), the day it was captured from the Turks. Visible are a Krauss 0-6-0T and what looks like a 4-wheeled open wagon with slatted sides. (N. B. Tourret makes no reference to a loco being captured here, though he does note ten engines at Afule and one at Massoudieh.)

22.



Sidney Fingerhood has sent this copy of a German (?) postcard of Haifa Station (now Haifa East) in pre-World War I times - note the Ottoman flag. He bought it in the early 1980's for \$5, and reckons it is now worth at least five times that amount. Does anyone have more details ?

23.

REVIEW : "THE HEDJAZ RAILWAY", by Rick Turret. Hardback with Dust-jacket (illus); 188 pages; 229 b/w photos; 143 drawings & tables; bibliography; 12 maps; 4 Appendices. Obtainable from the Publisher: 5, Byron Close, Abingdon, OX14 5PA, U.K., price £15.90.

Review by Rabbi Walter Rothschild.

This is it ! The long-awaited companion volume to Paul Cotterell's "The Railways of Palestine and Israel", which dealt with the standard-gauge system. Turret's book, packed with information, will become the definitive work on this subject. That is not to say that there aren't gaps (and the occasional slight misprint etc.) - but the stories of the interlocking lines that at one time or another have been linked with the Damascus - Medina route in some way are comprehensively told. Such lines include the Dera'a - Haifa, Haifa - Acre, Afule - Nablus, Massoudieh - Tulkarm - Lod - Beer Sheba - Sinai and even Jaffa - Jerusalem (where some of Turret's material complements that found in Cotterell's book.

The stories are intertwined through the complex history of the region, but sometimes the material in the book appears to follow no coherent pattern; the Jaffa-Jerusalem loco drawing, photos and timetable appear in the middle of a magnificent sequence of photographs of the fourteen Yarmuk bridges. On the other hand, it is wonderful to find photographs of the curious Mallet compound 2-4-6-0 tender locos of 1906; (pp.48-55).the locomotive variety was utterly bewildering. I should have liked to find out how the Hartmann 2-8-2's of 1918 reached Dera'a, bearing in mind the sea blockade of the Mediterranean (and the consequent capture of the Belgian La Meuse 2-6-2T's and 0-10-0T's of 1914), and the lack of complete rail routes through Turkey. Did someone really lug those boilers and tenders through the Anatolian mountains behind a train of mules ? A similar mystery (for me) surrounds the two 0-10-0RT's built for Lebanon in 1941 by SLM. How did a Swiss loco manufacturer a), have the capacity to build anything for export, b), get the raw materials, c). transport such merchandise (surrounded as it was by Axis countries) to a country that was, after July 1941, under Allied control ? Some fruitful grounds for research there, methinks.

In the nature of things the information available to any author on these lines will be sketchy, with the main sources of photographs being either official shots taken at openings of new bridges, tunnels, stations etc., and wartime shots, either official or taken by enthusiastic servicemen as circumstances allowed. In recent times the Hedjaz has been "rediscovered", largely by the "To Europe - For Steam" organisation which has run several trips there, using special trains on specific sections - so modern photos of rolling-stock and surviving steam motive power are reasonably-plentiful. The records and narratives are in consequence a little unbalanced, with much detail on the construction periods, on the exploits of T.E. Lawrence in 1917, on the "settling-down" of the system into different administrative areas following the partitions of the Turkish Empire in the early 1920's, the efforts of the Second World War, the destructions of 1947 and then, after a bit of a leap, to the 1970's. There is useful coverage of the modernized section operated by Jordan Railways in the South of the country.

Many of the tables of rolling-stock etc. are hand-drawn, the information extracted from official working timetables or stocklists that were presumably impossible to reproduce. Timetables are not given in a format as such, but described in the narrative. It is interesting to note the reason for the higher fares South of Dera'a (cf. Harakevet 6:20, para.4), this being the payoff of Beduin tribesmen who clearly

(as Lawrence found out) enjoyed blowing up the line ! In the circumstances, adding this to the prohibition on non-Moslem engineers South of El Ula, it is hardly surprising that the Southern end of the line was skimpily built.

The Hedjaz Railway has always fascinated, its history reflecting so closely the turbulent nature of the area it served. Murky religious and strategic excuses were made for what was and what was not; the line was effectively completed just in time to be destroyed and divided. The vast amount of motive power and rolling stock seemed to spend most of its time out of service, either through negligence and poor maintenance or through sabotage. Impressive heavy engineering saw vast viaducts constructed through the desert - to serve a line carrying perhaps two trains a week. What did the station-masters do to fill the time, when they weren't dodging bullets or taking pot-shots at passing bandits ? What kind of men drove the trains through such hostile territory, awaiting at every sleeper the charge that would send them to Allah-knows-where ? What draws people still to the rusting, silent relics that dot the Arabian sands ?

This is the book that tells most of the story. The rest may never be told - but "HaRakevet" is available to fill any gaps we can. In the meantime - for information, statistics and photos - get this book.

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24. PROFANITY !!

Sorry - don't get excited. Whilst ploughing through a fairly ghastly travelogue for pious young people, called "Half Hours in the Holy Land : Travels in Egypt, Palestine and Syria", (pub. James Nisbet & Co., London, no date but clearly preceding 1891 for there is no mention of any railway encountered or used in the journey), the anonymous author(ess) writes: (Ch. VIII):

"I remember a lady, whose mind was engrossed with the question of the return of the Jews to Palestine, being dreadfully shocked by a religious and highly respectable man, who presumed to express the opinion in her hearing, that the time was not far distant when there might be a railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and the cry be heard from an English voice of "Bethlehem Station !". The fair friend of Israel thereupon drew herself up indignantly and exclaimed, "Pray, Sir, don't be profane !"."

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25. Correspondence:

From: Paul Cotterell.

Ernie Jones is quite right, of course (6.9), for I can't reconcile WD 813 either ! I have rechecked Ray Justin's original letter to make sure that I hadn't misread his very clear handwriting but, no, it was 813 that he listed sure enough. My first thought was that he must have had 913 in mind. Possibly he did but, if so, why does he show it as having large numerals in the pertinent paragraph of page 4, issue 5, only to note it a couple of paragraphs further down the page as having been at Qishon Works at a later date without the large numerals ? In short, I just don't have an answer to this one.

The reference to a PR Departmental Loco No. S13 has me at a loss as well. Perhaps Ernie would be kind enough to enlighten me on this engine and save me some sleepless nights !