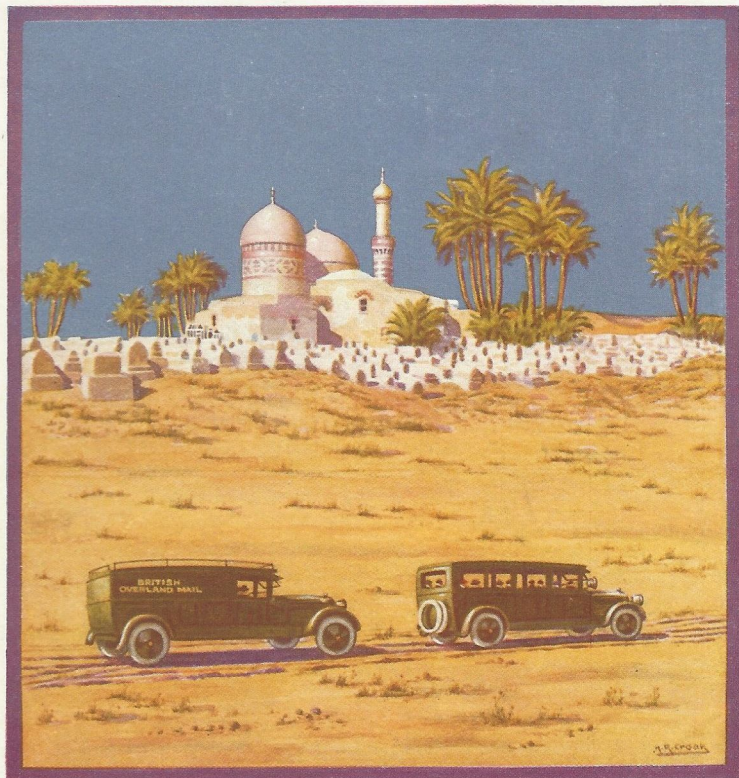


# THE OVERLAND DESERT MAIL

THE DIRECT ROAD TO THE EAST



HAIFA—BEIRUT—DAMASCUS—BAGHDAD

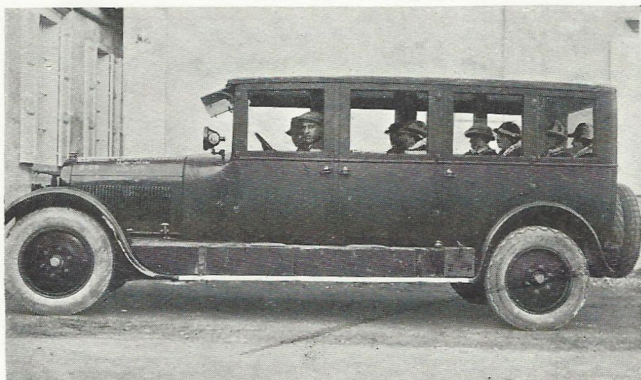
*by the*

## NAIRN TRANSPORT CO.

Pioneers of the Cross-Desert Motor Service  
BEIRUT, SYRIA.

*Chief Agents:* THOS. COOK & SON, Ltd.  
LONDON, BAGHDAD, AND BRANCHES

*For List of Agents see page 15*



NEW TYPE OF PASSENGER CAR NOW IN USE ON  
THE NAIRN TRANSPORT COMPANY'S OVERLAND  
DESERT MAIL TO BAGHDAD



MAIL AND LUGGAGE VAN NOW IN USE

*See page 6.*



# *A Brief Note on the Nairn Transport Company Pioneers of The Overland Desert Mail To Baghdad*

**I**N 1923 the NAIRN TRANSPORT COMPANY, which from 1919 had successfully operated a Mail and Passenger Motor Service between Haifa and Beirut, conceived the idea of extending their enterprise to Baghdad, crossing the Syrian Desert by one or other of the ancient caravan routes. Several trial runs were made that year from Damascus by various routes, including that *via* Palmyra and Queen Zenobia's old road to Hit. Those experiences conclusively proved that the most satisfactory route for a regular and reliable service was *via* Jebel Tenf and Routbah Wells.

A Weekly Service of specially constructed high-power cars was commenced over this route on October 18th of the same year, and has been maintained with unbroken regularity ever since. It is known officially as *The Overland Desert Mail*, and so popular has it become that another service has been added, and convoys now run twice a week in each direction. Under contract with the Governments concerned the Mails between Iraq and Persia and the Western World are carried by this Service, with expedition and punctuality. Never once have they been held up through mechanical inefficiency. The Nairn Transport Company is also under contract with the

War Office to carry Army Officers by this route. In place of the three weeks' journey by the old sea route, *via* Bombay and Basra, the Overland Desert Mail provides a

### **DIRECT ROAD TO THE EAST**

and brings Baghdad within nine days' easy reach of London. The cumulative effect of this economy of time and money is proving to be of great consequence to merchants, commercial men and travellers generally.

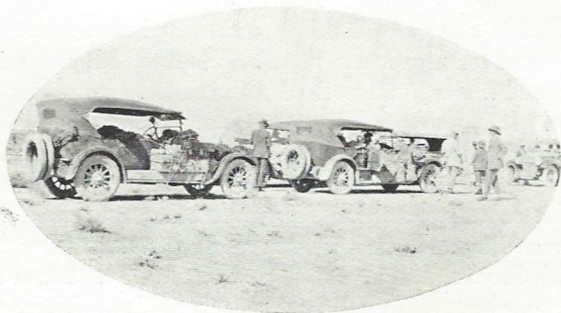


## *The Nairn Transport Company's Record*

The traffic figures to the end of 1924 on the Overland Desert Mail route Beirut—Baghdad are as follows :—

Mileage covered exceeds	...	1,000,000
Number of passengers carried	...	2,500
Weight of mails carried	... ..	50,000 lbs.

A list of some of the distinguished personages who have travelled to Baghdad by the Nairn Company's Service is given on page 14.



ONE OF THE EARLY CONVOYS

# Time Table

*Overland Desert Mail Haifa—Beirut—Damascus—Baghdad.*

OUTWARD SERVICE		HOMEWARD SERVICE	
<b>HAIFA</b>		<b>BAGHDAD</b>	
Leave every day	. 10 a.m.	Leave Thursday	1 p.m.
<b>BEIRUT</b>		<b>DAMASCUS</b>	
Arrive . . .	. 4 p.m.	Arrive Friday	6 p.m.
Leave Thursday	. 5 p.m.	Leave Saturday	9 a.m.
<b>DAMASCUS</b>		<b>BEIRUT</b>	
Arrive Thursday	. 8 p.m.	Arrive Saturday	12 noon
Leave Friday	. 7 a.m.	Leave every day	10 a.m.
<b>BAGHDAD</b>		<b>HAIFA</b>	
Arrive Saturday	12 noon	Arrive every day	4 p.m.

*For Connections with Europe and India see page 6.*

**NOTE.**—At present a Second Service is in operation between Baghdad and Haifa on Tuesdays, with a corresponding Service in the reverse direction, also on Tuesdays. This Second Service, however, is contingent on the public's requirements. With this Service connections with Europe are made by Lloyd-Triestino Steamers at Alexandria.

Every endeavour is made to ensure punctuality, but the Company accepts no responsibility for delay due to any cause over which they have no control.

## Fares

HAIFA to BEIRUT or vice versa . . .	£1 10 0
BEIRUT to BAGHDAD or vice versa . . .	£25 0 0
DITTO, Return available two months . . .	£45 0 0

No alteration can be made in fares for passengers joining or leaving the Overland Desert Mail Convoys at Damascus.

Bookings should be made at least two weeks in advance.





CROSSING THE EUPHRATES AT FELLUJAH

## *General Information*

### **CARS AND DRIVERS**

Specially built Cadillac cars are used for the Overland Desert Mail Convoys (*see page 2*). All the drivers are British ex-Service men with long experience of motor transport and of the East.

### **LUGGAGE**

Each passenger is allowed 75 lbs. of personal luggage free of charge. Any excess weight is charged for at the rate of 1s. per lb. The Company accepts no responsibility for the loss of baggage of any passenger.

### **FOOD**

Food, tea and drinking-water are supplied free while on the desert.

### **CLOTHING**

Passengers are recommended to provide themselves with warm clothing, a travelling rug and cushion. It is cold on the desert at night.

### **PASSPORTS**

These must be visaed by the British authorities for Iraq and by the French authorities for Syria.

Passengers travelling *via* Palestine must obtain a visa for that country from the British authorities.

### **CONNECTIONS WITH EUROPE AND INDIA**

**EUROPE**—Connections are made with the Overland Desert Mail Convoys by P. and O. Steamers from and to London and

Marseilles *via* Port Said ; and by Messageries Maritime Steamers from and to Marseilles *via* Alexandria.

Travellers *via* Port Said and Alexandria travel to Haifa by the Palestine Railway.

Connection is also made by sea with Beirut direct by the following steamship lines :—

Messageries Maritimes	.	To Marseilles.
Fabre	.	To Marseilles.
Lloyd-Triestino	.	To Venice or Trieste.
Khedivial Mail	.	To Constantinople.
Societa Italiana di Servizi Marittimi	.	To Naples and Genoa.

INDIA—Through bookings are effected from and to London, Karachi and Bombay by P. and O. and British India Steamers *via* Basra.

### SPECIAL CONVOYS

Special convoys can be arranged. For further particulars apply to the Company or their agents.

### MOTOR TOURS

Special tours can be arranged for parties desiring to visit Palestine, or Palmyra, Baalbek and other places of interest in Syria. Six-seater cars are available at a few hours' notice.

### PARCELS

Parcels and express freight are accepted for transport at the rate of 1s. per lb.



TEA AND CIGARETTES IN THE DESERT





A FRIENDLY CHAT IN THE DESERT



# *Notes on the Journey*

## **HAIFA—BEIRUT—DAMASCUS—BAGHDAD** **by the Overland Desert Mail**

*Particulars of routes from Europe to Beirut are given on pages 6 and 7.*

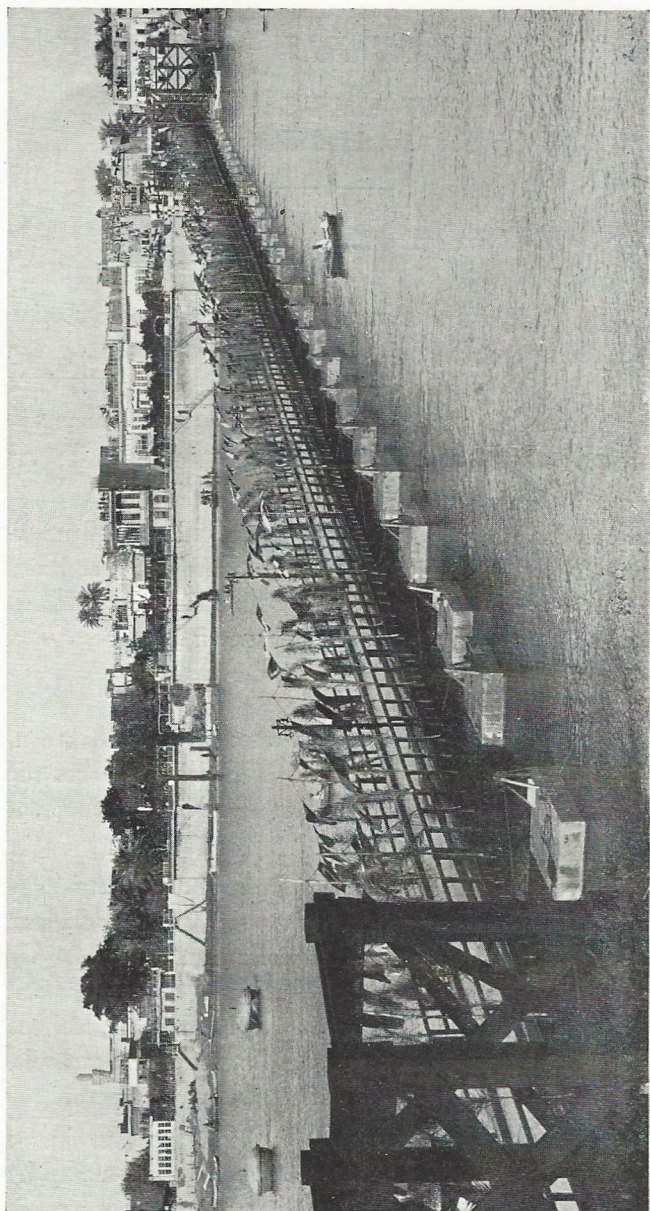
**HAIFA AND BEIRUT.** Travellers *via* Egypt and the Palestine Railways to Haifa travel thence by the Nairn Transport Company's Special Cars direct to Beirut through enchanting coast and mountain scenery, passing through Acre and Sidon and close to Tyre—between the Lebanon and the Sea.

Beirut, whence the Baghdad convoy starts, is the most flourishing town in Syria. It is also the finest port on this seaboard and one of the most important in the Mediterranean. Backed by the mighty Lebanon range, its situation is magnificent, and the beauty of its surroundings beyond compare.

**DAMASCUS.** From Beirut we travel over the Lebanon, across the Plain of Rayak, and over the Anti-Lebanon to Damascus. The Riviera itself does not provide more beautiful scenery.

We pass Bedouins and Syrians on the road driving strings of heavily-laden camels with gorgeous be-tasseled saddle-bags and quaint high-hooded carts drawn by teams of mules. We whirl by country villas, tents of black goats' hair, casinos and snow-houses, skirting round mountain slopes from which the views of blue sea and snow-capped peaks, villages and orchards, mountain torrents and fertile plain far below are superb.

Damascus, the "eye of the East," is the oldest living city we know. It lies on the very edge of the desert surrounded by luxurious orchards and gardens watered by cooling streams



THE MAUDE BRIDGE, BAGHDAD



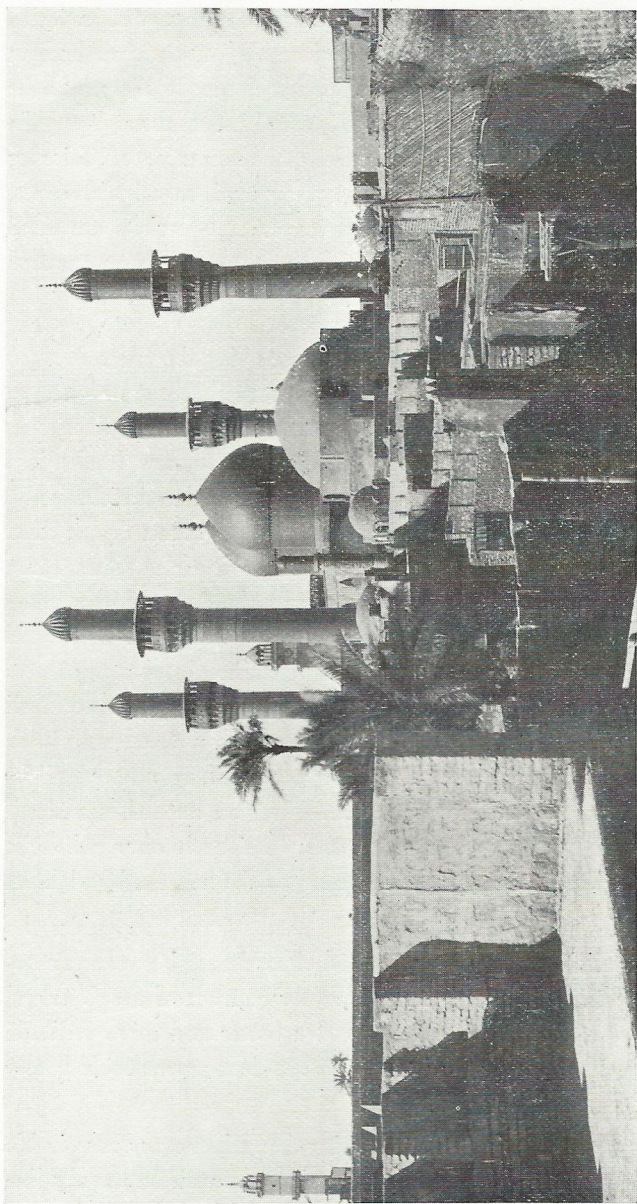
from Anti-Lebanon. The customs and costumes of its varied peoples have hardly changed since the days when Abraham visited it on his migration from Ur of the Chaldees into the land of Canaan. Its bazaars are famous throughout the world, and are more truly Oriental than those of Cairo or Constantinople. As the caravansary where all the desert meets to barter its wares, its streets and markets are filled with an assemblage of people such as can hardly be equalled in any other city of the East.

**THE GREAT DESERT.**

Leaving Damascus in the morning, we strike eastwards from the broad high road that leads to Aleppo, and enter the Syrian Desert. How utterly different ! And yet how fascinating. On and on, hour after hour, we speed over flat, smooth desert. Mirage blurs the horizon, and everything seems dry as dust. But dry grass and low scrub indicate a season when for a brief period winter rains turn even the desert into a green plain. We pass the Jebel Tenf on our left, a black and forbidding ridge which is the first landmark for many scores of miles, and by evening reach the wide and desolate Wadi Hauran. The sunset skies light up with red and gold, then suddenly change to the starlit purple of an Eastern night. We enjoy a cheery meal, then travel on beneath the starlit sky. With an unbroken horizon and such stars, who can wonder that the Babylonians studied the heavens by night?

At length we come to the ploughed furrow that guides the Air Mail across the once trackless desert between Trans-jordania and Iraq. But the motor convoys of the Overland Desert Mail have now marked a better and more indelible track by far—one that even rain and dust-storms could hardly obliterate.

At earliest dawn of the following day, when every perceivable object—an eagle in the sky, a string of camels on the sky-line—assumes an etched-out clearness of line indescribable, we



THE GOLDEN DOMES OF KADHIMEIN



cross the clay filling of an ancient volcano crater, and later on sight some curious bitumen pools. Soon after we approach the famous Mesopotamian plains and arrive at Ramadi in the Euphrates Valley, where passports are examined. At Fellujah we cross the historic Euphrates River by a bridge of boats, and on resuming our journey the numerous "tells" and remains of ancient canal banks remind us of the former glory and prosperity of the "Land of the Two Rivers." Gradually the desert waste is succeeded by villages and gardens, its loneliness by the hum and stir of life; the glistening domes of Baghdad shine before us in the Eastern sun, and we enter the City of the Caliphs at noon.

**BAGHDAD** appeals to the imagination chiefly by its associations with the Thousand and One Nights. It is a city which possesses to the full the colour, glamour and romance of the East, despite the coming of Western civilisation with the British Army and the Mandate.

A broad new thoroughfare runs through the city from north to south, but beside its modern stores stand squalid little Arab shops. The ironsmith works at his anvil on the footway quite unperturbed, and ox-drawn vehicles thread their placid way 'midst hurrying motor-cars. Step out of the main road, and you find yourself whirled back through the centuries to the days of Haroun-el-Raschid. Through just such bazaars and narrow balconied lanes did he wander at night with his companions.

The story of Baghdad and of the other cities in the "Land of the Two Rivers"—Babylon, Niniveh, Kish, Ur of the Chaldees and the rest—must be left to the guide books to tell. This may be said with certainty: the romance of Mesopotamia must ever be hers, though her former wealth has gone, her history cannot melt away, nor, as long as the sun rises and sets, can her rich colouring and fascination cease to be.

*Names of some of the distinguished  
persons who have travelled by the*  
**OVERLAND DESERT MAIL**

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THE SHAH OF PERSIA (SULTAN AHMED MIRZA).

LADY DOBBS (wife of Sir Henry R. C. Dobbs, K.C.S.I.,  
K.C.I.E., High Commissioner for Iraq).

SIR PERCY LORRAINE, BT., C.M.G., British Minister to Persia,  
and LADY LORRAINE.

LIEUT.-COL. SIR ARNOLD T. WILSON, K.C.I.E., C.M.G.,  
D.S.O.

LIEUT.-COL. SIR JOHN NORTON-GRIFFITHS, K.C.B., D.S.O.,  
M.P., and LADY NORTON GRIFFITHS.

SIR THOMAS R. J. WARD, KT., C.I.E., M.V.O.

SIR JOHN CADMAN, K.C.M.G.

MRS. A. T. McGRATH (ROSITA FORBES).

HON. KENNETH MACKAY.

SIR GEORGE C. HAMILTON, J.P., M.P.

A. DAVIES, ESQ., M.P.

THOMAS GRIFFITHS, ESQ., M.P.

SIR VICTOR WARRENDER, BT., M.P.

MAJOR A. B. BOYD CARPENTER, J.P., M.P.

COM. G. D. FANSHAWE, M.P.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS IRAQ FRONTIER COMMISSION :

MONSIEUR C. E. T. DE WIRSEN,

COUNT PAUL TELEKI,

COLONEL PAULIS.



# *Agents for the Nairn Transport Company*

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## **LONDON**

THOS. COOK & SON, LTD., Ludgate Circus, E.C.4.  
SLEEPING CAR COMPANY, 20 Cockspur Street, W.1.  
AMERICAN EXPRESS, 6 Haymarket, S.W.1.  
MESSAGERIES MARITIMES, 72 Fenchurch Street, E.C.  
OVERSEAS BUREAU FOR TRAVEL, 141 Victoria Street, S.W.1.  
LEP TRAVEL BUREAU, 27 Piccadilly, W.1.  
ITALIAN STATE RAILWAYS (LLOYD-TRIESTINO).  
COX & KING, 5 Suffolk Street, S.W.1.

## **NEW YORK**

THOS. COOK & SON, 585 Fifth Avenue.  
253 Broadway.  
SLEEPING CAR COMPANY, 281 Fifth Avenue.  
AMERICAN EXPRESS, 65 Broadway.

## **PARIS**

THOS. COOK & SON, 2 Place de la Madeleine.  
1 Place de l'Opera.  
SLEEPING CAR COMPANY, 5 Boulevard des Capucines.  
AMERICAN EXPRESS, 11 Rue Scribe.  
MESSAGERIES MARITIMES, 8 Rue Vignon.

## **MARSEILLES**

THOS. COOK & SON, 11b Rue Noailles.  
SLEEPING CAR COMPANY, 28-30 Rue Noailles.  
AMERICAN EXPRESS, 24 Rue Cannebiere.  
MESSAGERIES MARITIMES, 3 Place Sadi-Carnot.

## **BOMBAY**

THOS. COOK & SON, LTD., Cook's Buildings, Hornby Road.  
COX & KING, Hornby Road.

## **BAGHDAD**

THOS. COOK & SON.

