

**Reference code:** GB165-0344

**Title:** Edward Sykes Collection

**Name of creator:** Sykes, Edward Molesworth (1910-1992)

**Dates of creation of material:** 1930s-1992

**Level of Description:** Fonds

**Extent:** 30 items

**Biographical history:** Sykes, Edward Molesworth (1910-1992)

Born 10 January 1910. Third son of Sir Percy and Lady Sykes (née Evelyn Seton). Educated Rugby School and St Johns College, Oxford. Qualified Chartered Accountant. 1935 employed by NMK Danish firm building section of railway from Abadan to Tehran. During World War II served in Intelligence Corps, seconded to Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.) and served in Isfahan and Hamadan as Vice-Consul. Whilst in S.O.E he worked as liaison with the Bakhtiari and Qashqai tribes, to prepare them to resist the Germans if they broke through Stalingrad and into Persia and the oilfields. Following demobilisation joined Consulting Engineers, Sir Alexander Gibbs Partners. 1946 economic survey for Syrian Government. 1947 economic survey for Lebanese Government. 1948 with Gibbs to Tehran to work on water supply. After leaving Gibbs, worked in Paris and U.K. on contracts in India, Pakistan and Turkey. Married Naomi Stevens in 1945; 2 sons, 2 daughters. Died 16 July 1992.

**Scope and content:** Photographs of construction work in the late 1930s of the railway from Abadan to Tehran with a short account by Edwards Sykes of his work on the railway. One photograph, taken in April 1944, showing Edward Sykes seated in a tent with the Khans of the Qashqai tribe, negotiating the handover of some escaped German agents and one page of an account written by Edward Sykes detailing his journey to Tehran in August 1942 and the work assigned to S.O.E.

**Conditions governing access:** Open

**Language of material:** English

**Conditions governing reproduction:** For the photographs permission is required from the Sykes family with whom copyright rests.

**Immediate source of acquisition:** Received as a gift from the Sykes family in August-October 2002

**Location of originals:** Original photographs with the Sykes family

**Related units of description:**

**In MEC Archive**

GB165-0276 Sir Percy Sykes (who was the father of Edward Sykes)

**Archivist's note:** Biographical history provided by the Sykes family. Finding aid created by Debbie Usher, 29 Oct 2002 and revised 20 Jan 2021.

**SERIES AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE EDWARD SYKES  
COLLECTION**

**1. TransIranian Railway Construction Work**

- 1/1 Account entitled 'Some Notes on My Job as Director of NMK' written by Edward Sykes describing his work on the TransIranian railway.  
1 sheet  
not dated, ?1992
- 1/2 Photographs of construction work on the railway from Abadan to Tehran.  
Captions written by Edward Sykes with additional description in brackets.  
Arrangement follows numbers 1-27 written on the back of the original photographs by Edward Sykes.  
27 items  
1930s
- 1/2/1 'Service Road, Tangi-i-Chehar on TransIranian railway. Southern Section'  
[panoramic view of vast mountains looking down upon a road cut into the rock]
- 1/2/2 'Panorama of Luri mountains with Ab.i. Diz and railway bridge on Lot 6 South'
- 1/2/3 'Panorama of Lot 6 South' [view of mountains, looking down upon the railway that is near to a river]
- 1/2/4 'Ab-i-Diz. Central Camp' [panoramic view of buildings set against the backdrop of mountains and a river. See also 1/1/20]
- 1/2/5 'Railway gallery on Lot 6 South' [depicting tunnel structure]
- 1/2/6 'A Kalak on Ab i Diz (raft)' [two men kneeling on a traditional raft]
- 1/2/7 'Service road on Lot 6 South Tang-i-Chehar' [camels transporting supplies on narrow pathway set against overhanging rock and a ravine with a river]
- 1/2/8 'Junction of Ab i Diz and Ab i Cezar'
- 1/2/9 'Site Camp. Ab i- Diz 1937 Construction of section of TransIranian Railway'
- 1/2/10 'Gorge on TransIranian Railway 1937' [photograph slightly faded]
- 1/2/11 'Rock and railway Lot 6 South' [railway line passing under part of mountain]

- 1/2/12 'Rock formation by Ab i Diz on Lot 6 South' [railway line passing mountainous terrain marked by distinct layers of rock]
- 1/2/13 'Service Road and railway on Lot 6 South'
- 1/2/14 'Convoy on Service Road. 1938/39' [trucks on road transporting railway building material]
- 1/2/15 no caption [panoramic view of mountains]
- 1/2/16 'Ab i Diz in the dry season. Camp site. Construction of TransIranian Railway. 1938'[panoramic view looking down upon the camp site of buildings and roads]
- 1/2/17 'Construction of TransIranian Railway. 1938/39. Tunnel opening'
- 1/2/18 'The finished bridge Ab-i-Diz. 1939'
- 1/2/19 'Ab i Diz in full flood. Service Bridge. Construction of TransIranian Railway. This bridge was destroyed by floods one winter night 1936/37 with the loss of 6 Italian workmen'.
- 1/2/20 'Camp Site 1938' [depicting buildings set against the backdrop of mountains and a river. See also 1/1/4]
- 1/2/21 'Railway and river. Lot 6 South'
- 1/2/22 'Building a viaduct. Lot 6 South' [depicting bridge under construction with the pillars completed and scaffolding in the uncompleted sections of the bridge]
- 1/2/23 'Service Road bridge across Ab-i-Diz on Lot 6 South and rock formation'
- 1/2/24 'Finished bridge Lot 6 South' [workers standing on a bridge surrounded by mountainous terrain]
- 1/2/25 'Aerial ropeway across Tang-i-Chehar' [depicting a worker with construction material being transported across a ravine by rope and pulley].
- 1/2/26 'Finished bridge on Lot 6 South' [depicting bridge across a river in mountainous terrain]
- 1/2/27 'Ab i Diz and scenery on Lot 6 South' [railway track, tunnel and bridge in mountainous terrain with a river]

## **2. Special Operations Executive (S.O.E) Work**

- 2/1 Part of an account by Edward Sykes detailing his journey to Tehran in August 1942 and the work assigned to S.O.E 'to cause as much trouble as possible to the Germans should they invade...'  
1 sheet

not dated, ?1992

- 2/2      Photograph of Edward Sykes seated in a tent with the Khans of the Qashqai tribe,  
negotiating the handover of some escaped German agents.

1 item

April 1944