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A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East.
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33:1 - CFS (Syrian State Railways) Co-Co DE-+2800.406 at Damascus Cadem 1/3/95 (Photo Andy Wilson)

33:2

Editorial. Issue 33.

Your Editor's life remains fascinating, mobile and "financially-challenged"; nevertheless, I have managed briefly to "touch base" in between work-related travels to Sarajevo, Berlin, Vienna and Bratislava. Alas, not to Amman, Damascus or Beirut - but fortunately a good network of contacts keeps me - and you, the readers - remarkably well informed on what is happening in various parts of the Middle East. I am certainly the only rabbi to get an envelope full of photos of Beirut in the post on the same day that the news is full of air raids on that city.... It is not always possible to use all the material that arrives, but nothing is ever thrown away.....

Issue 33 is another mixture. I am slowly learning to use my new PC; in the meantime a lot of stuff was printed off on my old Amstrad, and rather than typing it all over again, or paying someone to transfer material from 3" to 3½" disc (the same problem as caused the Gauge Conversion in the 19th. Century !) it is simpler just to use what there is. A lot remains on file and will be used up bit by bit, leading to a hybrid appearance of issues for a while to come. One day I hope to acquire a scanner (and the skills to use it), to help in incorporating photos and maps - after which "Harakevet" may finally reach the technological standards of the late 1990's - probably in time to be out of date again. Oh well. In the meantime: Enjoy !

The Editor.

33:3. HR 2-6-0T "No. 62" plinthed outside Damascus Kanawat (Hejaz) Station, 7/4/96.

(Photo: Andy Wilson). (See 33:7(ii).)

33:4

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

a). Beersheva Service. According to Israel Radio a trial service to Beersheva, for use mainly by university students, commenced in April 1996.

Doughty reporter Sybil Ehrlich tried it out, and writes:

"The information I received from the *Itim* news agency was that the train would run at 2pm. I arrived at the Beersheba station at 1.30, no sign of any train. I was asked whatI wanted, and explained I was from the *Jerusalem Post* and had come to report on the students' train. "It's going at 4.45, not 2." So I spent an unexciting afternoon wandering the streets of Beersheba - even the art gallery in the old Turkish station was closed. At 4.15 there were about a dozen assorted railway officials at Beersheba station, including Benny Naor (the Public Relations man) - to my surprise. The train comprised 'Jumbo' 610 and ten coaches - 603, 117, 82, 607, 618, 116, 83, 112, 76, 641 - and was decorated with balloons. It left promptly at 4.45 and travelled about 800 metres to a makeshift station adjacent to the university, were crowds were waiting. After the usual speeches, the train was launched with a bottle of champagne and everyone climbed aboard..... About 300 students made the 85-minute trip to Tel Aviv.

The train is the first of several which have been chartered by the Ben Gurion Univesity Students Union, after I.R. had rejected a request to provide regular services to Tel Aviv on Sundays and Thursdays; the Union hopes to cover its costs and, if there is sufficient demand, hire further trains on other days; according to Sybil's report in the *Post* on 21/4/96, further trains southbound from Tel Aviv were due to run on April 21st. & 28th. at 9am., and May 2nd. & 9th., departing 2pm.

Avishai Beverman, the President of BGU, thanked the students for their initiative, and Deputy Mayor Andre Uzan noted that all revolutions had been started by students, and expressed the hope that this would lead to reinstatement of regular passenger trains to Beersheba. (The last servcie was withdrawn in 1978).

b). Getting High in Haifa. In "Kol Bo Haifa" 4/96 is an article with two sketches regarding proposals for an elevated Light Rapid Transit system in the Haifa region. Light cars would operate on tracks elevated on pillars - the illustrations in the newspaper display whimsical artistic images of space-age monorails whizzing around (but not connecting with each other) while young lovers sit on a bench under a pillar entwined in foliage.....).

c). Railway Museum News. Latest acquisition for the Haifa Railway Museum is an Esslingen d.m.u. driving car No. 3 (according to Chen Melling built by LWB) - whether originally a motor or a trailer unit is unclear; It had been at the old Tel Aviv Merkaz station for several years, and was latterly stored at Bnei Berak (though how it was removed, bearing in mind there is no longer any track connection to the old Merkaz station, is also unclear.) It was taken to Haifa as a special load in easy stages at a very limited speed, (20 kph) being left overnight at several intermediate stations en route, in March/April. It was moved (by T44) into the Museum siding (that nearest the road) on the morning of May 3rd., which entailed moving some of the redundant stock out to Tel Hanan.

The Museum now has an interesting variety of rolling stock, mostly in need of restoration - sometime cosmetic, sometimes also structural. Alas, resources are limited. Does any reader have access to appropriate contacts, funds etc. ?

[Incidentally - a note on a different museum - Armley Mills Industrial Museum in Leeds. A visit in April 1996 revealed two narrow-gauge wagons amongst a pile of other stock, all badly in need of restoration (now where have we heard that before ?) - but bearing Arabic inscriptions. Enquiries of Geoffrey Horsman led to information that they came from the Sudan Gezirah Board, having been built by Robert Hudson in Leeds. Ron Fitzgerald was instrumental in getting them repatriated to Leeds, (along with a McLaren "diesel windlass" ploughing machine) around eight years ago, where they are currently neglected by the new management of the Museum.....]

e). When The Heat Is On.... A khamsin heatwave on 12/5/96, when temperatures reached 40° C, contributed to considerable disruptions on I.R. Train 46 (07.20 Rehovot - Nahariyya) was running 30 minutes late out of Atlit because of chronic overcrowding. Shortly after leaving Hof Carmel the emergency brake handle was pulled, bringing the train to a halt in mid-section. Discovery and release of the brake handle took some time as it was almost impossible for the conductor/guard to make his way along the train, and another 20 minutes were lost as a result. The following Train 4 (08.36 Tel Aviv - Haifa) was held at Hof Carmel for 15 minutes until Train 46 cleared the section.

Train 24 (IC3, 11.25 Tel Aviv - Haifa) failed at Bet Yehoshua with what later turned out to be a minor fault, easily rectifiable. Passengers had to transfer to the following Train 52 (11.54 Tel Aviv - Nahariyya) with Train 24 subsequently working to Haifa as empty stock.

Train 25 (IC3, 17.08 Haifa Central - Rehovot) began its journey with no air-conditioning, though it should not have been allowed out in such condition. The inevitable happened as soon as Bat Galim were passengeres threatened open revolt, refusing to risk their lives in a mobile oven. Train 25 was promptly cancelled on the spot, with passengers transferring to the following Train 61 (16.35 Nahariyya - [Tel Aviv). Train 25 returned empty to Haifa East. Another IC3, with working air-conditioning, was sent to Haifa Central for coupling to Train 11 (IC3, Haifa Central - Rehovot) in order to take over Train 25's diagram. Arrangements were complicated in the extreme. Train 11 is a return working offf half of Train 26 (IC3, 16.35 Tel Aviv - Haifa Central), itself running 20 minutes late. At Haifa Cen. Train 26 splits, the front IC3 set continuing empty to the Haifa East depot, with the rear set returning south as Train 11. However, on 12/5 the rear set was faulty so the front set had to return as Train 11. This meant an extra shunt at Haifa Central in the middle of trying to work other trains through the station and also accommodating that empty IC3 sent out from the diesel depot to deputise for the cancelled Train 25. With three or four IC3 sets cluttering up the platforms at one time, any passenger who climbed aboard the wrong one could certainly be forgiven for his mistake. The timetable was in tatters by now, members of the Operating and Traffic Departments were losing years off their appointed three-score-and-ten, while the passengers were deciedly petulant.

The extreme heat caused other problems throughout the day, particularly with points which refused to align and lock properly and had to be passed at great caution until nightfall brought relief.

Similar problems were apparently experienced some ten days previously during another khamsin heatwave, but details are (mercifully) unknown as your correspondent [who spends his spare time earning a living by acting as Signalman at Haifa Central. Ed.] was enduring somewhat cooler conditions in the UK at the time.

f). Underground Activities Close Main Line ! No - not a return to the gory days of the 1940's; the Haifa - Nahariyya line was closed to all traffic north of Qishon from 13 - 17/5/96. This was to allow the installation of passenger subways at Qiryat Haim and Qiryat Motzkin stations, where second platforms are being built.

g). Sign of the Times ? Sybil reports that Jerusalem station has acquired a sign on the street side saying "*Tahanat Rakevet Yerushalayim*" in Hebrew and "*Jerusalem Railway Sta*" (sic.) in English - perhaps they ran out of blue paint after repainting Ramle, which is (Hallelujah) no longer pink, but white with blue trim.

h). More on Hashalom. See 32:4 (j) - more of a "Further comment and correction" than actual news, but Sybil was able to attend the opening ceremony for the new station. It opened for business on Saturday night Feb. 17th., and Sybil was able to catch the first train from there to Jerusalem the next day. This is a through working from Nahariyya -a total journey of around 4 hours - yet despite promises by Benny Naor there were no buffet facilities operating on the train, and although the station is super-modern there are no refreshment facilities there yet either. The official opening ceremony was postponed from March 6th. to 19th,. due to the horrific bombings; Guests (by invitation only) assembled at Tel Aviv Merkaz to take special trains formed of IC3s to Hashalom. Security was very strict in view of the fact that Shimon Peres was attending. The platform at Hashalom was spread with refreshments, and guests then escalated up to the entrance hall where the ceremony took place. The noise of traffic rushing past on the Ayalon highway almost drowned out the usual platitudinous speeches. The ceremony ended with fireworks (!) on the platform as the special trains departed back to T.A. Central.

The station has been designed by architect Eri Goshen, the wide roof forming a giant wave shape covering the bus stops at Hashalom bridge as well; it is intended the new station - second of five planned along the Ayalon, though at this rate it will be halfway through the next century before all are built - will serve about 2 million passengers p.a.

i). Timetable Blips. Services between Binyamina and Haifa were suspended on Friday 15/3/96 due to trackwork.

Due to the introduction of Daylight Saving Time, the Saturday evening trains from 16/3 onwards were to beretimed to run two hours later (i.e. leaving Tel Aviv Hashalom northbound at 21.44 & 22.39, southbound from Haifa Bat Galim at 21.00, and Qiryat Motzkin at 21.02.)

j.) Building Works. According to "Yediot" 9/5/96, building works on the suburban line between Tel Aviv and Benei Berak were due to start soon; 40M shekels are due to be spent in 1996 and a further 60M in coming years.

k). More Revelations from Sinai. "Kol Bo" of 15/3/96 has an article and map regarding Egyptian proposals to rebuild the line from Qantara to Rafah, and Palestinians rebuilding from there towards Ashkelon.

A map shows a "Proposed Alternative line" which runs from Ismailiya several miles to the south of and parallel to the former line (which was, after all, built near the coast to be under the protection of British naval guns !), and would appear to roughly coincide with the old route from El Auja towards Beersheba, thus avoiding the "Gaza Strip" (or whatever its current correct name is) completely.

l). Haifa East. From reports it appears that very few trains now stop at Haifa Mizrach (East) station - the old Hejaz terminus that also houses the Israel Railway Museum. Until recently many trains paused here, even though not advertised to do so, and cleaning of coachings sets also took place; now the traffic swishes through.....

m). New Station ? There are proposals for a new station to be built at Hotzot Hamifratz (also known as Vulcan Junction, Haifa) - presumably near the Qishon signal box and level crossing and the junction for the Israel Chemicals branch.

33:5 **ROLLING STOCK NEWS**

More snippets from Steve Tish:

Liveries: G12 124 was repainted in IC3 colours and arrived back in Haifa 28/3, re-entering service 31/3. 113 was at Qishon during April, and returned to Haifa 20/5, re-entering service next day.

Collision. Locos 601, 614 and 701 were in a collision at Ashdod on 30/3/96 (further details unknown). 601 was only slightly damaged and was repaired and released from Haifa immediately; 701 was initially dealt with at Haifa, then transferred to Qishon during the week commencing 5/5; 614 was still at Haifa in mid-May having suffered engine damage, and will also be transferred to Qishon for further attention.

Deutz Demise. Not previously reported is the sad demise of the remaining Deutz 0-4-0D shunter No. 201 which is no longer in the southern yard at Qishon and is assumed to have been scrapped on site.

Loco Order. There are several reports of new locomotives being ordered - one bizarrely illustrated with a colour picture of an SNCF "Sybic" electric bi-current bo-bo No. 26009 ! Steve reports that the firm order is only for six new passenger locos, with a possibility of 12 more with new bodies but refurbished engines - or alternatively more new locos and fewer refurbished ones. Negotiations are continuing with Alsthom, and delivery is anticipated at the end of 1997.

This is separate from the order for three new shunting engines - a decision on these is imminent.

Kronoim. (IC3 sets.) Of the Mk.2 sets, set 4 arrived at Haifa sheds 28/3, set 5 on 1//5. As at 9/5, Mk. 1 sets Nos. 1 & 3 were at Ramta, in the final stages of preparation to be shipped to the USA; they departed from Haifa Port on the vessel "Vera K." on 20/5/96, destination Baltimore. They are to be loaned to Amtrak for 2½years, and in their place I.R. will receive two new Mk. 2 sets. The IC3's are to be tested on suburban services in San Diego, Los Angeles and Atlanta, and have been chosen for such duties apparently because the Americans wanted sets that had already been "run in", had overcome any initial "teething problems", and that were fitted with air-conditioning suitable to the climate of those areas.

Apparently there is budgetary approval (for 95/96) for a further batch of up to nine more IC3 sets (Mk. 3 ?), and negotiations continue also on this front.

Coaching Stock. No. 608 was refurbished at Haargaz by 7/4/96, and went to Qishon 8/4, re-entering service 18/4, though bearing no paint-date.

At the end of April the following were at Qishon being prepared to go to Haargaz works - Nos. 84, 613, 631.

Nos. 612, 624, 626, 627, 628, 631, 635, 681 have acquired white roofs.

No. 635 and 639 went to Haargaz for refurbishment on 27/3.

617 now bears a paint date of 21/3/96. 80 was repainted at Qishon 2/96.

616 (which was damaged in the Haifa fire) is expected to be converted to a generator coach in due course. Nos. 54 and 58 have been withdrawn from service and both lie at Qishon (weeks commencing 3/3 & 28/3 respectively).

33:6. Result of sabotage near Lydda, 1947. Remains of a 4-6-0 (the bogie now on top of the frames) and some damaged PR coaches. *(Photo: John Lee).*

a). Hedjaz. (i): According to a report in the "Continental Railway Journal" No. 105, Spring 1996, p. 354, Observations from Nov. 1995 : "The abandoned branch line from Ma'an to Ras an Naqab [also known as Naqb Ashtar. Ed.] is still remarkably intact. Bridges and viaducts which traverse wadis are nearly all in place, as are complete sections of track. However, at the Ras an Naqab end, some of the trackbed has disappeared beneath the realigned Amman to Aqaba desert highway. The Amman/El Hasa - Aqaba phosphate line is in fine condition and has modern signalling, but traffic did not appear to be very heavy."

(ii): From Andy Wilson: On Sunday 7th. April Andy managed another visit to Damascus:

"First visit was to Kanawat Station to see the Amman train away at 07.15; see that the 2-6-0T No. 62, displayed in front of the station, has a wrong works plate; this is from a 2-8-0, with the last figure of the number altered to show "1203", which was the works number of the Jung 1908 2-8-0 originally numbered 62 ! [Later No. 122]. The 2-6-0T is really Jung 966 of 1906. [See Hughes, p.80. Ed.]

The Amman train comprised loco 401, match truck, two wooden coaches, six Jordanian vans and another match truck - all vacuum braked, for which 401 is fitted. The match trucks are low-sided, with an American coupler at one end. The one behind the loco was ballasted with old rails, no doubt for stability and operation of the brakes without skidding; the one at the rear did not have the train brakes connected, and was presumably needed just for shunting. There were a number of passengers, both foreign and local.

The Hijaz Bar train [See 32:9] had not moved since my visit two months ago. The fancy canopies are welded in place so the train is not mobile. A 2-6-0T and CEL van Ff 5104 had been added in front. I did not note which engine this was and it does not show in my photos - I think it was 751. It appeared to be in reasonable condition but not in regular use.

Further down this platform there were three four-wheel coaches in fairground colours. (More later on these). On the track behind the Amman train was the HR's rail-mounted Land Rover of mid-1950's vintage, painted bright yellow. This was first out, on the Serghaya line, after which the Amman train moved off. Then I walked along the track to Cadem, and halfway along there was a whistle and an approaching cloud of steam, which turned out to be No. 754 with one 4-wheel coach heading into town.

There was no activity at Cadem. I checked out standard-gauge train times and then taxied back to Kanawat where 754 was about to depart with a passenger trip to Ain el Fije, which cost me 10 Syrian Pounds (about 15p. !)

[Incidentally, Kanawat is technically the name of the district in which the station lies, not the station itself, which is now simply known as "The Hejaz Station" - but we will continue to use this name as it is now well-recognised amongst our readers. Ed.]

The Fije train was well filled with people taking a picnic trip. Three ex-DHP 4-wheel coaches of different colours, red, yellow and pink on the train and a grey one left behind at Kanawat. All carried boards marked 'Hejaz Railway' (not CDS). The train went very cautiously along the first part of the line which is roadside, but moved at reasonable speed once on private track. We stopped at Hamme for water.

On arriving at Ain el Fije the Land Rover was at the station. 754 ran round straight away, but it was not due to return to Damascus until 4pm so I went back by road.

There was a notice in Kanawat station advertising some special free trains on 17th. April, Syria's Independence Day and Golden Jubilee. Damascus to Ain el Fije, outward 08.30, return 17.00; Deraa to Muzerib, outward 08.00, return 17.00; and Deraa to Bosra, outward 09.30, return 15.00. My guess was that one train would do both the Muzerib and the Bosra runs. However....

Due to the conflict situation my work was disrupted and I used the opportunity for another brief trip to Syria on 17/4/96. The specials turned out to be separate trains, and as I had been to Bosra with TEFS in 1991 I decided to go to Muzeirib. The trains were already at Dera'a the previous evening; three steel Ganz coaches/trailers for Bosra in the station and loco 401 in front of the shed, and railcar R11 for Muzeirib, inside the shed. Also in the shed was a track maintenance machine ! [Such an item has never been reported before, and judging from the state of the track in photos I have seen, is more than badly needed - but where would one start ? Ed.] The usual steam locos were outside, Nos. 66 and 161, apparently not having turned a wheel for some time. 66 looked complete, 161 was short of some coupling rods.

The Muzeirib train was first out, at 08.30, half an hour later than the notice at Damascus had said. The line from Dera'a was generally on a low embankment all the way, through agricultural land. Approaching Muzeirib station on the Haifa line, the railcar swung off to the right and headed to Muzeirib village about 2km. away, where the line terminated with a run-round loop across the road from a lake where a fair was set up for the Independence Day celebrations. I noticed that the steel sleepers on the Muzeirib village branch were dated 1906. I did not see any trace of the former DHP (Damascus-Muzeirib line) station near the HR buffer stop.

Apparently there is a regular Muzeirib run, Fridays Only. The state of the track did not imply recent use and presumably this operates only in summer."

[See photos elsewhere in this issue. Many of Andy's shots are historically fascinating but, comprising as they do thin strips of rusty rail set amidst high weeds and lacking the "clag" element that some find more photogenic, may not reproduce well here. Ed.]

In a later letter, of 22/5/96, Andy states that the "Muzeirib village branch" is a part of the very first piece of the HR to be opened - from Muzeirib DHP to Dera'a. [Presumably this was needed for access to the building works elsewhere before the parallel Damascus-Dera'a line was completed. Ed.] "Tourret says it was closed soon after the HR was opened to Damascus, which is clearly not the whole story. I would have expected to find a DHP station in Muzeirib with buildings similar to those elsewhere on DHP lines, but I did not see anything likely - though my search was short and I would like to return to look more throughly."

Regarding the 4-wheel wagons stored at Dera'a: "These are ex-DHP. I am not aware that there was any distinction made between those for the Hauran and the Beirut lines. A number of them have "Athermos" axleboxes, A French product which was being advertised in the 1950's. Typical of the French love of gadgets, but clearly the DHP was keeping its equipment up-to-date. (I assume a retro-fit of older wagons, not new construction.) The TL had very few wagons (according to Tourret), and I have not seen any positively identified photos of them, but I do have a copy of a photo of Beirut station, claimed to be taken in 1895, which shows

some wagons which I suspect are TL. They have vertical screw brake columns on the ends, but no brakeman's shelter, and do not correspond to anything else recognisable to me."

b). Syria: Standard Gauge.

Also from Andy Wilson, dated 7/4/96: "Later I went to Cadem to ride the standard gauge to Homs, which the people in the station office said was scheduled at 17.25. The Booking Office said 17.15, and their computer-generated ticket said the same, but it really moved off at 17.25. The exterior of the train was filthy and it was hard to see out of the windows, although it was clean and comfortable inside. CEM shunter 104 DE was standing at Cadem and the train engine was Russian-built LDE 2800-276 in blue livery. [Almost Turquoise. Ed.] Once on the way, a loco was seen on a grain train at the silos near the turn-off from the HR line - LDE 1500-, but I missed its running number; it was in a pinkish-grey livery, long hood and end cab. A bit further out we passed large yards where 110 DE and LDE 2800-426 (in red livery) were noted. Soon after this it got dark and very little could be seen. We passed a freight with two LDE 2800's. The 2800-276 was not in good order, with lots of black smoke and slow running along the line. Eventually we stopped in the middle of nowhere for over an hour. I think an assisting engine must have turned up because we then rolled on without further incident, but it took until about 23,.00 to get to Homs. The track looked quite good, but it gave a rough ride - it needed a thorough tamping and lining campaign. I got a bus back to Damascus, and to bed at 03.00 !

c). Lebanon. Also from Andy Wilson: I have received some photos showing parts of the former HBT line (betwen Jubail and Batroun) and the former station area in Beirut. They indicate that the track - flat bottom rail on steel and concrete sleepers - is still intact in some areas, totally overgrown (but still present) in others, and missing in a few. He adds that it is hard to get good angles for photography on many former HBT relics - one either has to stand well distant, or cope with obstructions from trees and buildings closer up.

He notes that the recent hostilities led to a small reduction of road traffic in Beirut, and a dramatic improvement in air quality ! Clearly the place neds a decent metro.

d). Saudi Arabia. From "Fahrplancenter News" No. 21, Feb.-April 1996, p.8: (Translations by Editor):

"In relation to the size of the country and its wealth, Saudi Arabia's railway network is quite modest. There exists a total of 1,390 km. of rails in the Saudi kingdom, including the two main routes from Ad Dammam and Ar Riyad (the capital), and all branches.

The system was last extended in the 1980's, when the 140km. stretch from Ad Dammam to El Hofuf was doubled and this route, like the dead straight 309 km. main line El Hufuf - Ar Riyad stretch, was improved to suit 150 km/h speeds.

The stations of Ad Dammam, El Hufuf and Ar Riyad were completely renewed. The whole route now has UIC60 (60 kg/m) rails, The section El Hofuf - Ar Riyad is also double track. The rails were made in a steelworks near El Hufuf. All level crossings along the lines are now equipped with automatic barriers,

powered by batteries which are charged through solar energy. Alongside the new El Hufuf - Ar Riyad line there remains the former single-track and curved line which leads via Harad and Al Kharj. The average speed on the old line remains at around 40 to 50 km/h, in stark contrast to the new line. Trains over this route (there are two return services each day except Fridays) require 13 hours, whereas the two return services over the new line (Daily except Thursdays) require only 4 hours for the 454 km. line Ad Dammam - Ar Riyad.

The degree of comfort offered in the trains over the two routes is also quite different. The slower trains, which travel overnight, are really freight trains with passenger accommodation, and offer only the older-style 2nd. class coaches; the faster trains are composed of fully air-conditioned 1st. and 2nd.class coaches built by Schindler in Switzerland, and also have Restaurant Cars. There are separate compartments for men and for women, for women with children, and family compartments, appropriate to the Islamic traditions of the country. Since women are not allowed to drive cars in Saudi Arabia, the Women's compartments in public transport are especially important. Each express train comprises a diesel loco and 8 express coaches.

The railway owns over 59 diesel locos; only six of these date from a 1981 French order (Francorail/Jeumont-Schneider), the rest are all from GM-EMD in the USA; the oldest locos date from 1953 and the newest from 1985. Only Bo-Bo and Co-Co types are represented; depending on their power rating, which varies from 746 to 2611KW, the locos are permitted maximum speeds of 110 to 160 km/h. The Saudi Government Railroad Organisation (SGRO) also operates 49 passenger coaches, 9 Restaurant Cars and 2,340 goods wagons. In Ad Dammam are the central Workshops, which have a capacity for 78 line engines and 33 shunting engines, and where 20 locos can be repaired at the same time. There is clearly a great deal of over-capacity. The lines and stations could also cope with much extra traffic.

Passenger traffic is growing gradually and in 1993 reached 399,295 passengers (in 1990 there were 393,000 and in 1992 399,000). Goods traffic fluctuates between 1.6M and 1,9M tons per annum.

The rails rest on Monobloc concrete sleepers, 1667 sleepers per kilometre; as well as the 60 kg/m rails there are still some 54 kg/m rails in service on older sections. The steepest gradient is 1% (1:100) and the sharpest curve has a radius of 565 m; the maximum axle load is 29 tons.

Even though all the above gives a very positive picture of this railway system, there are some negative points too. The railway makes a heavy deficit. From 1990 to 1993 the receipts rose from 60.5M to 90.27M Riyals, but the expenditures sank during that period only from 315.2M to 303.92M Riyals, indicating that the railway covers less than 30% of its costs. Main cause of this financial misery is the high wage level, compared to the low ticket prices and freight tariffs and the very intensive maintenance of the lines. Sand drifts are a major problem worthy of mention. Many massive concrete bridges have had to be built against the rare but violent periods of high water in the wadis. A third of the expenditure is also dedicated to paying off the costs of the modernisation. With the formation of the new government at the beginning of 1996 the former President of the SGRO has become Transport Minister. Not much is known about this man, except that he is a supporter of expansion plans for the railway system.

Under the direction of the former President of the SGRO there were already plans between 1990 and 1995 for the construction of a 100 km. long line from the harbour of Ad Dammam to the industrial centre of Jubail, but the then-Transport Minister displayed little interest, hence this project will not now be completed until 2000. However, this short stretch along the Arabian Gulf is only a small fragment, compared to the wider expansion plans. However, a blow to supporters of the Hedjaz Railway is that there are no plans to reconstruct this line.

The major project under discussion is a 690 km. (approx.) line from Ar Riyad to Jiddah on the Red Sea. Since Jiddah is the commercial centre on the Red Sea coast, this line makes the most sense as it would remove Saudi import and export traffic from the troubled Gulf area. With a branch to Makkah (Mecca) it is also hoped to bring a part of the pilgrim traffic onto the rails. Such a branch would be likely to carry millions of passengers per year.

From Riyad northwards to Gassim and Ha'il a further secondary line is planned, in order to open up the hinterland better. In older plans there was a scheme to continue this line into Jordan, Syria and Iraq, but this never happened due to the political differences with Iraq.

Another secondary line from Ad Dammam via Az Zahran in the United Arab Emirates and Oman is not a high priority, since only limited traffic is expected on this route - for it must be borne in mind that the country has an excellent road network which is quite capable of handling the traffic at present.

At present Saudi Arabia still has the necessary financial resources to expand its rail network and cover its enormous deficits. However, the oil reserves are continually declining. The country is beginning to encourage industrialisation, since improvements in agricultural production can only be limited, due to the dry climate. Whilst Oil is brought by pipeline to the harbours for loading, Industry would require a high-capacity and efficient transport infrastructure, which would especially link the centres of Ad Dammam and Jiddah with the harbours for imports and exports, the large consumer centres such as Ar Riyad and Al Madinah and important production centres such as Jubail. This could be achieved with railway lines, which would also serve the passenger traffic.

It now depends on the new Transport Minister, whether he can set the points in the right direction for expansion in the new century."

e). Former Persian Loco for Sale....

Your Editor receives a wide variety of curious items in the post; one (via Matthew Kessler) was a catalogue of American locos and rolling stock for sale. Catching his eye was an advert for:

"ALCO RSD-1 No. 8006, Started life on the Rock Island but was drafted for war duty in Europe and Middle East. Located in Kentucky. Stored serviceable. Excellent Condition. For information call: Jim Satterwhite, tel. 704-436-9393, fax. 704-436-9399."

Reference to Hugh Hughes' "Middle East Railways" (p.110f) shows a photo of sister loco 8048 (Alco of 1943) and that Nos. 8000-8012 were all Alco 1,000 hp. Bo-Bos re-bogied as Co-Cos before despatch to the USATC-operated lines in Iran. It is to be hoped that this historic loco will find an appropriate new home.

f). Iran. From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 21, p.38: (Samuel Rachdi has a most amazing range of contacts and sources !):

- (1): Trams. Three German concerns have recently signed an agreement with the city of Mashhad, whereby the city will receive a tramway system for 100 billion Rials. The route will be 17 km. long and there would be 50 trains operating, to carry an estimated daily load of 40,000 passengers.
- (2): Openings. The Iranian Foreign Minister announced on 8th. Jan. that from the beginning of the Iranian year, which commences on 21st. March 1996, the new railway line between Mashhad and Sarakhs (on the border with Turkmenistan) would be opened. At first only for freight traffic, but passenger trains will operate over the new route soon. [See 32:14]. (Andy Wilson says the BBC reported the opening on 13th. May, claiming this to be the final link in a through route from China avoiding Russia.)
- (3): Rumours of New Trains. According to reports in the USA, which have so far not been confirmed by any European source, the Iranian State Railways are to order or have ordered several IC3 trains in Denmark, to improve the express services from Teheran. Has this uncertainty perhaps anything to do with the tensions between several countries and Iran, relating to issues of terrorism ?

g). Egypt. Again from 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 21, p.27:

The government is seeking possibilities for financing the reconstruction of the Sinai railway from the Suez Canal to Gaza, and for the construction of a bridge over the Suez Canal. The renovation of the old Western Desert Extension lines from Mersa Matruh to El Sollum (the border with Libya) should be completed in 1996, to be ready for any eventual extension back to Tobruk in Libya. More air-conditioned 3rd. class coaches and new diesel locos are to be ordered this year.

"Eisenbahn Magazin" 6/96 has (p.8) two photos of Type DE2550 Co-Cos built by the ADtranz Works in Kassel (formerly ABB-Henschel), of an order of 68 such locos for the E.N.R. Livery is light green with a yellow bodyside strip which continues round the front, and yellow cab roof. (Just one cab). Specifications given include: Designed for freight, top speed 80 km/h, General Motors engines, 1845 KW, overall weight 132 t., axle load of 22t.. They are intended to be used in pairs on the line being constructed from phosphate mines at Abu Tartour in the Sahara to Qena on the Nile and Safaga on the Red Sea coast, and are designed for extreme temperatures with special air filters against sand. Should one loco fail, the second should be able to maintain progress (albeit slower) with the heavy phosphate trains. Anti-slip protection is fitted, and the speed is measured through radar.

The first two locos are pictured undergoing test running on the Kassel-Naumburger Eisenbahn; these are the latest of over 400 Henschel locos delivered to Egypt in recent years.

h). Yemen. Andy Wilson writes of a book "The Two Yemens" by Robin Bidwell (Longman 1983), which mentions the Turkish railway project in Yemen, from Hodeidah to Sanaa; a survey report was made in October 1909, the first sod was cut May 1911. Another line was proposed from Hodeidah to Taizz and Dhamar. Bidwell comments that "neither plan was to get very far". Certainly the Ottomans were facing serious difficulties in Libya and the Balkans and presumably they decided to cut their losses in far-away Yemen. The date fits the diversion to the Hejaz of the Roulx

(Yemen) carriages and wagaons. Also, Borsig supplied their 0-6-0 tanks Nos. 8060 and 8061 in July 1911 to "Jemen" through the agency of Decauville. Whatever became of these?

33:8. Former HBT track betweeen Jubail and Bartroun. 31/3/96. Flat-bottomed rail on concrete sleeper with steel spacers - disused. *(Photo: Andy Wilson)*.

33:9: CFS Bo-Bo Bo-Bo No. 104 (built CEM) at Cadem, 1/3/95. *(Photo: Andy Wilson)*.

Notes and Comments.

a). Mystery Loco in Beirut.

Via Paul Cotterell comes a query from Keith Clingan who recalls correspondence from Ernie Jones forty years ago regarding an unusual loco which Ernie sighted at Beirut in January 1945. This was a 60cm. gauge outside-cylinder 0-6-0T Decauville 1717 of 1917, which was dumped on the ground in front of some standard gauge wagons at the Beirut HBT station. The loco carried no indication at all as to its owners. Keith, who is an expert on French industrial locomotives, notes that Decauville 1717 was one of many standard 8 tonne engines ordered for military service by the Ministère de la Guerre (French Ministry of War), but is unable to add anything further on this particular example. Can any of our World War Two veterans recall seeing this small loco at Beirut, or is any other reader able to supply details ?

b). Hashalom Station: Another White Elephant ?

Hans Kohut has some sardonic comments on the new station: It serves the "Qiryah" (Government district) and the Army HQ, where nearly everyone already has his own private car, whereas the great majority of non-car-owners, who might conceivably wish to use public transport and connect from the Ayalon rail line to the great new Tel Aviv bus station, will find that the station for this has not yet been constructed..... Hans recalls the opening of the "new" Tel Aviv South station in the green fields of Mikveh Israel; the ceremony was carried out by then-Transport Minister Shimon Peres. Hans did not mince his words to the later Prime Minister, the Railways' General Manager Zwick, and Gad Yacobi; he predicted the short lifespan and dreadful fate for this station, which was architecturally and technically admirably up-to-date for its time. Fortunately the station survives for other purposes now, partly as a Training Centre, and may be adapted as a depot for IC3 units, but there does indeed seem to be a tendency in Israel for grandiose plans for wonderful stations - in the wrong place !

c). On 32:19.Milstein Memoir.

This very lengthy memoir has brought a few responses:

- (i): Robin Davies, a contemporary of Aubrey and Yetta Milstein, adds a note of personal regret regarding their attitude to the English ! [It is unfortunate that reporting of past conflicts and disagreements may revive painful memories. However, if items in "Harakevet" stimulate memories and further information - even contradictions - then all readers can benefit. Ed.] From his notes: "I myself had many friends among the Jews and Arabs. Indeed one of them was the Max Feuerstein (later Avnoor) that he mentions. When I left Palestine I gave Max and his wife Sylvia my M.G. (TC). Max was in charge of the Motor Transport for the P.R. in those days, and in consequence was one of my staff. I found them a delightful couple. From Palestine I went to Africa where I was appointed to the Kenya - Uganda Railway - later the East African Railway. When I had been there 2 1/2 years (I had got married in the meantime) I had a message from the Nairobi branch of the South British Insurance Co. that they had had a telegram from their Haifa branch to the effect that "A Mr. Feuerstein wishes to know how much you want for your car". This downright absolute honesty was typical of Max and I admired him for it. Sadly, when my wife and I visited Israel in 1983 Max had died,

but we spent an evening with Sylvia at her home on Mount Carmel and talked of old times.

Other friends too have unfortunately passed on. Alexander Maldevan is one. A driver from Czechoslovakia, he became our Senior Loco Inspector and was Shedmaster at Haifa S.G. Shed for two years. During 1946 he and I carried out modifications on the L.M.S. engines. We changed the oil-burning firepan completely, fitted n.g. 105cm. injectors instead of their cumbersome exhaust injectors; modified piston packing to eliminate piston rod scoring; and many other details all of which improved the performance of these engines.

Socolovitch I knew well. A retiring man with great technical ability, he became the first C.M.E. of the I.R. He was a personal friend and I can well remember, one evening, the great regret he expressed at my leaving - indeed he was a great friend and admirer of the British... He had been with the P.R. for more than 25 years and had known many British people. In spite of all the danger and difficulties, I enjoyed my five years with the P.R., as did most of my colleagues. I find it sad that, apparently, Aubrey has such antipathy towards the British personnel!

He is certainly wrong in classing District Commissioners as "third-rate administrators". Far from it ! Before they could step onto the lowest rung of the administration ladder (District Officer), they had to go through a most rigorous interview. Usually they were required to have a good Degree - often one found District Commissioners who had Oxford "Greats" (First-class Honours in Greek and Latin). They were of impeccable character and Aubrey maligns them wrongly....

The Palestine Police had a dangerous and difficult job to do, and while there were a few bad mistakes, I think they did their job with honesty and bravery. I cannot believe the story of the "Life sentence or Palestine Police appointment". This is the stuff of pub jokes ! Nor, equally, can I believe that our judiciary could have been "paid off" as is said on page 38. These things just don't happen with such people !

My final reason for doubting a lot of Aubrey's recollection is his statement that in 1947 Efrati was Head of the Motive Power section. He most certainly was not, since I held that very post ! It was called "Locomotive Superintendent" in those days but it meant the same and there was no other post."

- (ii). From Theo Pelz: "re. p. 31: I never knew that the Allied invasion force into Lebanon in 1941 was led by a General Milstein, and that Moshe Dayan was just a member of a scouting party when he lost an eye !

re. p.33: Messrs Spinneys Ltd. had one branch on Jaffa Rd. near the German Colony, the other in Herzl Street on the Hadar.

re. p.38: Fawzi Kaukaji was not an "Iraqi leader", but a former Turkish officer who in WW1 took part in the Armenian holocaust; he merits a report on his own.

re. p.39: No HR trains ran from Haifa after Independence Day in 1949. I should know, since I worked at the Qishon workshops in Spring 1952." (N.B. Other sources disagree in turn with this !)

[Note: As stated before, it is not the intention of "Harakevet" to reopen old wounds to the extent that pain and embarrassment are caused - but it is often revealing to compare different recollections of the same period or event. Speaking as a Cambridge graduate, I have to say that the fact that someone was a bright fellow with a good Oxford Classics degree did not necessarily make them into a broad-minded or philosemitic colonial administrator ! All Police forces have been known for the variety of men in their ranks - and from the P.P.O.C.A. itself it is clear that many policeman

became increasingly angered and partisan as their friends and colleagues were killed or injured. So - it is probable that there is right on both sides of this debate. It is hoped that all will feel able to share the pages of this magazine and share with others their views and memories, however personal. Ed.]

d). On 32:18. Accident. Robin Davies (whose photo it was) adds the following information: "These vehicles belonged to the HBT, and the accident occurred between Nahariya and Acre. It was caused by flooding in the winter of 1946. The coach derailed and was telescoped by vehicles following. The engine and front vehicles got across but the track was in saturated ground. It was an unusually difficult accident to clear because of the mud."
Paul adds: "The two damaged coaches are definitely ex-Great Indian Peninsula Railway. The one nearest the camera is numbered 32. This does not fit in with the PR numbering list for those four ex-GIPR coaches officially in PR stock, so perhaps it was retained from service in India. [Or an HBT number - see above. Ed.] The accident must have happened close to a station [Manshiye ? Ed.] since there is a double-arm semaphore signal prominent at right."

e). On 32:21: Locos at Taba. Paul adds: "I have not visited Taba to view the Deutz diesels displayed there, but from other photographic evidence it is obvious that the locos have been spruced up fairly recently. Unfortunately they have also lost the large hand-painted numbers they once carried. I am surprised that the diesels are still plinthed in Taba, having rather expected them to be disposed of by now as so much 'junk'."

f). On 32:22. Sarafand Map. Somewhat coincidentally, a group of interested individuals was able to penetrate the huge Sarafand army camp in December 1995 to view remains of the layout there. Everything was much overgrown and it took some time to orient ourselves. Eventually we found the long platform, now very derelict, and plunged into the surrounding undergrowth to find that the three adjacent tracks were still there. The hut and latrine shown on the 1938-39 diagram had disappeared, but an addition was a well-preserved station building at the west end of the platform. Since this is not indicated on the drawing it must have been a wartime addition. Built in concrete with a 'crazy-paving' pattern etched on the outside walls, it was possible to make out a Ticket Office with typical window, a Waiting Room, what appeared to be a Parcels/Goods office and, possibly, the Station Master's office. It was not possible, however, to see if those proposed lines had actually been built since this area was behind a high wire fence. It appears that, anyway, this area has seen a good deal of fairly recent building, so remains of any lines there could well have been completely obliterated. As this is still a military area, photography was unfortunately not permitted."

g). On 32:23. Kiryat Motzkin. Also from Paul: "Theo Pelz reminds me that there used to be a long siding north from Kiryat Motzkin station, parallel to the main line, serving an army camp on the west side. I remember this well. The camp was derelict in the 1970's and then gave way to new residential building. The siding and camp were probably built soon after the diagram had been prepared (i.e. 1943-44). As I recall, there were several internal sidings in the camp, and even towards the end two or three derelict PR vans could be seen there."

h). On 32:24: Industrial Lines. "Another insubstantiality recalled by Theo Pelz was a light railway in a stone quarry in the neighbourhood of Geula in Haifa. This was probably used to bring stone from the quarry face over a short distance for loading on to road trucks. I think the quarry closed in the 1950's and, while I've not explored the site, believe it has now been built upon. The line, or lines, would have been hand-worked with, no doubt, a few tip wagons."
(NB : The Editor has found photographs in 1920's books of short works lines near Kibbutz Kinneret, on drainage works, and a line at Rishon leZion wine-cellars, probably for moving barrels around.)

i). On 28:14: Cyprus Notes. Len Redshaw comments that the late Ray Tustin reckoned there was only one loco surviving, a Hunslet 0-6-0T on a plinth outside the former station in Famagusta, whereas Uri reported two locos. Can anyone clarify ? (Uri Ben-Rehav is certain that there are two, which he photographed - a Hunslet tank and a semi-dismantled Baldwin tank.)

j). On 32:25: Len adds that the five photographs he took at Armant were reproduced in 'Industrial Railway Record' for Sept. 1995, with correspondence in following issues.

k). On 28:24 and 32:7(c):- the rebuilding of the Hedjaz Railway: Mr. E. Ingerslev (now of Tenerife) has responded to Dr. John Dayton's memoir thus: "He describes me as the Consulting Engineer to the partnership, which was true, and I did complete the design of the thousands of bridges and improvements of the line, or rather the curvature of the track; but I was also the legal representative of the partnership vis-a-vis the client, and for the major part of the contract ran it on the spot as Contract Manager until illness forced me back to the U.K. Not much was outstanding, mainly the actual tracklaying, which was in any case to be carried out by a specialist company."

[The Editor muses: How strange is the postwar history of the old HR; the Haifa branch had a few twinges of life and then sank into weeds and rust; the Saudi section came so close to full life, then had the plug pulled from it just before proper reactivation. The Jordanians acquired a variety of modern locos from the 1940's and 1950's, (English, Belgian, German, Japanese....) but no new carriage stock; conversely the Syrians acquired no new steam locos and ran their line with a mixture of pre-WW1 German or Swiss steam locos and later Rumanian and Hungarian diesels and diesel railcars, the latter often doubling as hauled stock..... When Palestine Railways was still acquiring and operating unbraked four-wheel wagons, so that valuable space had to be used in wartime transporting gods brake vans out to the Middle East, the HR freights used bogie stock with continuous brakes - technically far ahead. Yet at Dera'a are still lines of derelict four-wheel wagons that appear not to have been used for many decades - are these relics from the "Tramway Libanais" or, perhaps more likely, from the Hauran line Damascus-Muzeirib, which closed in the middle of WW1 and of which I have not seen a single picture ?}

33:11

"THE HEDJAZ RAILWAY"

From ""The Locomotive" Magazine, Vol. XX, April 15th. 1915, pp. 79-81.

This anonymous artcile, illustrated with several excellent photographs that unfortunately do not photocopy well enough to reproduce here, gives a good and comprehensive account of the state of knowledge at the time - even before T.E. Lawrence and his companions had got to work ! The strategic worries are also revealing.

"In the recent attempted invasion of Egypt by the Turks across Arabia and the Suez Canal the Hedjaz Railway appears to have been utilised, for if reports given by prisoners taken near Ismailia are true, the station at Seila was used as the detraining point for the ill-fated expedition. Here soldiers were brought from Haifa and Damascus with their stores and munitions of war, such as they were. To provide a water supply for the troops whilst crossing the desert pressed steel boats are said to have been used, which it was hoped would be ultimately employed in crossing the Canal; these arrangements must surely have been due to Teutonic ingenuity.

The Hedjaz Railway is unique inasmuch as it was ostensibly constructed to enable Mahomedans to be better able to make pilgrimages to their Holy Cities of Medina and Mecca. Its sacred character appealed to the Faithful, and subscriptions poured in for its making from all Mahomedan countries. In fact taxes were levied, and in force up to quite recently, which were supposed to go towards the construction and equipment of the line. Public advertisements, theatre programmes, etc. had all to bear a revenue stamp of about ½d value, which was supposed to go to the funds of this railway, but whether it did or not, or whether the line was secretly subsidised by the Germans is not known, though this tax, as many others in Turkey, was frequently evaded. Recent events, however, appear to strengthen the theories some of our military experts advance that strategy, and not religious considerations had most to do with its inception. Be this as it may, there is one very notable fact connected with the construction and equipment of the line, and that is that the material and rolling stock, almost without exception, came from Germany, and engineers from the Fatherland were practically the only foreigners engaged on the work.

The railway is of 3-ft. 6-in. gauge, 1.05m, and runs from Damascus almost due south to Medina, via Ma'an, Tebuk etc. whence it is presumed to be carried on to Mecca. Whilst this is fairly certain to be the case, it is of course difficult of confirmation, as though German engineers were the guiding influence in connection with the railway, and also in many cases other foreigners, such as Greeks, Armenians, and the usual Levantines were

to some extent employed, even they were not allowed access to the Sacred City, and the line from a certain radius was made and entirely worked by the Turks themselves. In cases where a train is worked to within this district, should there be an "Unbeliever" in charge of the train he is relieved, and a Mahomedan is substituted. However, if it is assumed that the railway does actually touch Mecca and go on to Jeddah, a port on the Red Sea almost exactly opposite to Port Soudan, from which the Soudan Railway gives connections to Atbara and Khartoum, this project is certainly very suggestive, as it doubtless provides the best route for an invading force to enter the Soudan.

At its northern extremity the line is expected to make a junction with the Baghdad Railway via Aleppo, and so connect with Smyrna and Constantinople. Through running will, however, be out of the question, owing to the difference in gauge, the Baghdad and Anatolian railways being 4-ft. 8½-in. The disturbed state of Turkey, and lack of funds, have so far prevented the completions on the line given.

In our 1908 and 1911 volumes we described and illustrated some of the locomotives built in Germany for the railway, and now we reproduce [p.81: Ed.] a photograph of one of the I. and II class carriages and some views on the railway.

The car is for main line service; it has end doors only, and accommodates 8 first class and 30 second; it is built with a double roof, somewhat after the old Indian pattern, but has no side sunshades. The automatic vacuum brake is fitted.

The view of the train leaving Damascus is interesting as it represents the usual "make up" of one of the pilgrim trains. There are two baggage vans, five third class, one second, one first and a rear brake and luggage van, ten vehicles in all. The tank engine attached is used for local and shunting purposes.

Another illustration shows a train at one of the main line stations with one of the 2-8-0 locomotives, illustrated on page 226 of Vol. 17, at the head.

The railway workshops at Cadem are shown in the remaining photograph. These are well equipped with German machines and tools, and are in fact very up-to-date, with electrical power. As usual in the Near East, the staff available for working such a large establishment, when so largely confined to Mahomedan labour as is the case on the Hedjaz Railway, is not fitted to the requirements of the modern workshops, so that much of the equipment is idle or not worked to its fullest efficiency.

The wagons shown in the view are loaded with horses, presumably for military purposes.

The distance by rail from Damascus to Medina is more than 820 miles, and it is 285 miles further across the desert from Medina to Mecca. The principal depots on the line are at Ma'an and Tebuk, 285 an 430 miles respectively from Damascus. El Ula, 609 miles from Damascus, is the last locomotive centre north of Medina, with quite a railway settlement for the staff. Beyond El Ula the infidel is forbidden to go. Some very heavy grades are encountered beyond Tebuk, and Mallet engines are used. Unusually large tenders are fitted to the engines owing to the scarcity of water, which is obtainable at only a few places on the railway. The line, as far as Medina, was completed in 1908."

33:12. Ain-El-Fije Station, Syria, 7/4/96. SLM 2-6-0T No. 754 on excursion, & converted Land-Rover. *(Photo: Andy Wilson.)*

33:13: USATC 0-6-0T WD 71276 being overhauled at 155 Railway Workshops Coy., R.E., Suez. *(Photo: D.S. Currie).*

33:14. W.D. 2-8-2T No. 1015 at Suez, Aril 1948. Built by Hudswell Clarke 1942, and used briefly on the HBT Railway. Seen under overhaul or storage, minus coupling rods.

(Photo: D.S. Currie).

33:15 **EGYPTIAN MEMORIES.**

From Mr. G. Bosher of Kingswood, Bristol, a former Peckett's apprentice, comes the following memoir:

"I left Newhaven on the ferry for Dieppe just after Christmas 1945; my draft had come down by rail from Otley the previous day. It was early evening when we left Newhaven as I remember the lights along the front at Brighton disappearing behind us. At Dieppe we boarded a train made up of old LMS and Southern carriages pulled by an old French locomotive.

The trip across France to Toulon took 36 hours; the train stopped four times, twice for food and washing at transit camps, once to change engines from steam to electric and at Lyon station, I am sure, just to give the local spivs the chance to buy anything the soldiers would sell.

It was early morning when we saw the Mediterranean Sea; in our compartment we had spent a miserable cold night as the train was not heated; two of our group slept in the luggage racks, the rest of us sat up. We then discovered that the other compartments had bunks let down - they had known something we didn't !

The draft stayed at Toulon a few days awaiting a ship. It was freezing cold. The ship was a Liberty Ship, built in New York, and we were held overnight in harbour due to a storm. Two tugs kept the ship pressed against the jetty, as it was feared that the ship would be blown against a sunken French warship.

I have two vivid impressions of the trip to Port Said; first, due to a storm, being sick into the swill bin and being teased by those that who were seated at the tables awaiting dinner - I then found myself being violently thrown to one side whilst about a dozen others tried to be sick into the same bin! Some time later I was told that an orderly had tripped with a tray of spaghetti and sent it wriggling like worms across the mess table....

The other impression is of the sea in the Straits of Messina; it was like glass, the ship seemed to be sailing through treacle, and then I saw Mount Etna towering above the clouds.

At Port Said we boarded the Egyptian train that was to take us to Tel El Kebir. The coaches were saloon type with wooden seats. The train was surrounded by small boys begging. Most of us tossed them our small change. As the train started one boy jumped up, put his hand through the open window and took the glasses off my pal's nose !

I was surprised to see the top of a ship sailing across the desert. The railway ran parallel to the Suez Canal. During the journey I was also surprised to see a streamlined train pass us - it was far more modern than anything I had seen in England.

When the train reached Tel El Kebir we had to board lorries to take us into the Base, although there was a branch line that went through the perimeter fence from the station. Tel El Kebir base was supposed to be five miles wide at its widest point. The railway into the base ran parallel with the road, at least as far as the point where the lorries we were on turned off towards the Transit Camp, where we stayed for about three days. The weather was freezing cold and we had to wear greatcoats.

As a REME Fitter I was posted to "K Camp", which was attached to the workshop which overhauled construction equipment, bulldozers, cranes, road rollers etc. The shop was very large and modern - you could have put the biggest part of Peckett's Locomotive Factory, where I had previously worked, inside that workshop.

We had Egyptians as Fitters' Mates, and they were very good. When I required a fuel pump for a diesel engine that we did not have in stock, one offered to bring one from his village - no doubt one that had 'disappeared' from the Base. The old hands always said that the local villages had a better stock of our equipment than we did.

I was at "K Camp" for about six months, and it was while I was there that I saw the Hudson-Hunslet and Deutz locomotives. To get to the Garrison Cinema we used a short cut through the stores compound; around the compound was a narrow-gauge track. I rarely saw the locomotives in use, this particular compound appeared to be full of cases of soap.

Once or twice when visiting the Garrison Cinema I saw a main-line locomotive; this was of North-British build and an oil burner; at night it was a most spectacular sight, flames shooting out all around the firebox, and the noise could be heard for ten minutes after it had passed.

The REME reorganised the workshops and concentrated all Diesel engine overhaul into one workshop. The fitters, including myself, were transferred to "L Camp" which was near the perimeter fence, near a gate that led to a village where a lot of the Egyptian workers came from. (I have forgotten its name). The "L Camp" personnel worked on vehicle overhaul as well as engines.

To understand the Egyptian's skill in the art of thieving I must explain that the base was surrounded by a ring of double concertina wire, inside which was a minefield, then a high wire fence; at every corner of the perimeter was a tower with searchlights shining down the minefield, and inside the fence was a perimeter road patrolled by armoured car.

Some of the lads in my tent worked on vehicle overhaul. Once there were about forty Jeeps lined up in the Shop ready to go out next day; when the workshops were opened the Jeeps were still there, but not a wheel or a tyre, all had vanished during the night ! We were awoken about 5 o'clock one morning by an explosion; a wheel was found on the minefield, and a

trail of blood led the police to our own cinema about half a mile from our camp, where an Egyptian was found minus a foot...

To get out of guard duties most of the chaps in the tent joined the armoured car patrol, which meant a night duty around the perimeter road once a fortnight, and a morning a week exercising in the desert outside the base. These trips usually went down the army road from the base to the next army area where the main hospital was; on the way we passed empty camp sites, where all that remained would be cook-houses and water towers, and signposts that read "New Zealand Corps", "Indian Corps", "Armoured Corps", or "Bond Street", "The Strand" etc. - all very sad, these had been the camps of the Alamein troops. Even sadder to me was the little Army cemetery in Tel El Kebir village, graves going back almost as long as the base had been there.

Just outside the base was a memorial to the troops that had fallen at the Battle of Tel El Kebir - the remains of the tenches were still there after sixty-four years.

In the workshops where I was stationed were also employed some German POW's who did most of the work; they spoke English and were very good craftsmen.

The Ailsa Craig engines which I believe were those used in the Hudson-Hunslet locos came in for overhaul quite often; we also had a Deutz single-cylinder horizontal engine which was similar to the one I saw on the Deutz loco. I worked mostly on Caterpillar diesel engines, from little starter engines to ones for the largest bulldozers.

At weekends we often went to Ismailia on the Suez Canal. Where the Canal entered the Lake at Ismailia is Ferry Point; there an old chain ferry took vehicles across the Canal; it was driven by an old Ruston Hornsby horizontal diesel engine which was kept in immaculate condition. We watched the ships passing and saw the emigrant ships on their way to Australia.

During my time in Egypt I went by train to Alexandria, but other than a memory of sharing a compartment with a friendly English-speaking Egyptian I recall little of that trip.

I left Tel El Kebir in September 1947 and, whilst waiting on the station, I saw in the distance the front of a train. It appeared to have a white muff around the engine. As it got nearer I could see that the muff consisted of people - not on the engine, but on the coaches behind. They were on the roof, hanging outside from the windows, and as the train stopped they even came from underneath. This was the workers' train to the base - we in contrast got onto an almost empty train.

I returned home on a P&O liner to Liverpool and to demobilization."

33:16. Rehovot Station, 1995. *(Photo: D. Jacobs.)*

33:17. G12 115 leaving Jerusalem, 27/11/95. This photo is explained in the article opposite.

FIRST WORLD WAR 60cm. GAUGE FROM JERUSALEM TO BIRA A FEW CLUES DISCOVERED. By Paul Cotterell.

We have seen in past issues of Harakevet that there remains doubt about the course taken by the very short-lived 60cm. gauge line to El Bira in the environs of Jerusalem station. It would be fair to say that the world of academe has not been convulsed by any acrimonious public controversy on the matter, but one or two of us have been quietly beavering away in the hope of finally putting this particular niggle to rest. I do not claim that some recent findings of mine will still the debate completely, but they do suggest quite persuasively that the 60cm. gauge line approached Jerusalem station from the south-west as shown in 21:16.

I took the accompanying photo on 27 November 1995. G12 115 has rounded the first tight curve out of Jerusalem station (that's the one noted by Dr. Pick as defeating the Baldwin tanks on several occasions in WW2) heading the 14.45 departure for Tel Aviv - the only passenger train of the day down to the coast. 115 is about to step out on the Bethlehem Road. The crossing keeper's hut is to the right of the loco; just visible is the wheel for raising and lowering the road barriers. At left is an example of those metal-pole telegraph posts which are still standing, though unused now, all along the Jerusalem line as well as elsewhere (I believe the British installed them). This level crossing appears in Walter's sketch layout in Harakevet 1, page 4. To take this photo I was standing with my back against the colour light signal marked 12 on Walter's plan.

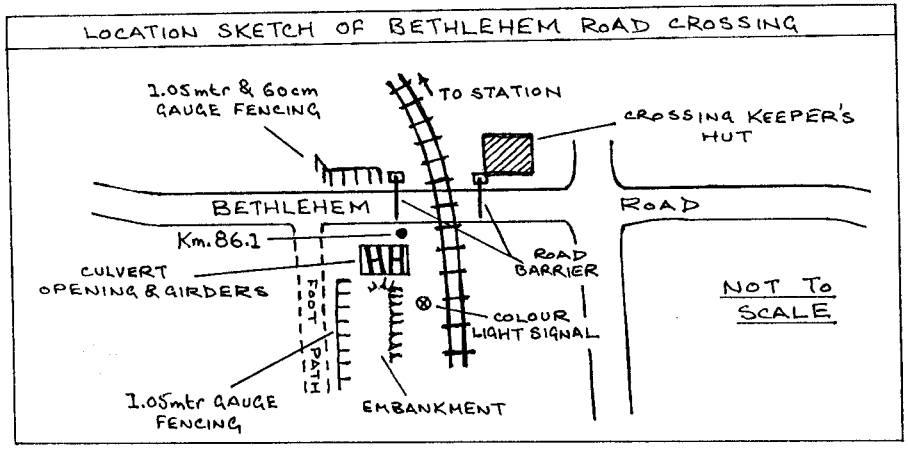
Now, let's focus on the lower left corner of my photo. Half hidden by shadow is the small white post for Km. 86.1. Immediately in front of the kilometre post is an opening in the ground. At this point a trickle of water (I assume this to be the headwaters of the Nahal Refaim - the Stream of Ghosts [or Giants. Ed.] crosses beneath the railway from left to right in a culvert. The opening visible in the photo is stone-lined. Set into the top lip are four steel girders, arranged in two pairs, each pair with a stretcher rod between the girders. (I've indicated this arrangement in the accompanying sketch.) My first - and later - reaction when studying these girders was that they appear to be spaced perfectly for supporting 60cm. gauge track. Further, it will be seen from the sketch that the pairs of girders are not parallel to each other. Assuming that they did once support 60cm. gauge rails then it seems likely that this was the site of pointwork, with the single line splitting into one or more sidings as it approached Jerusalem station.

I looked around some more. Across the Bethlehem Road, at the foot of that metal-poled telegraph post, is an old fence made of discarded rails. Some of these are stamped "J.J. Angleur 1892 AB" as noted by Walter in

issue 1 page 3. (I feel certain, incidentally, that these can only be original J&J rails. They are too light to be standard gauge and too heavy to be 60cm. gauge.) Mingled with these are lengths of obvious 60cm. gauge rails. A couple of hundred metres further on, right by the base of the station signal box, are some more lengths of 60cm gauge rails. These have been cut to a standard length of maybe 50cms and laid as covering over what I guess to be the same stream (Nahal Refaim).

As I said, these items are not conclusive proof that the WW1 60cm gauge railway actually ran alongside the main line as it neared Jerusalem station. The narrow gauge track might have been brought from elsewhere. The girders over that opening by km. post 86.1 might have served some different purpose. There are other physical elements which might militate against this being the actual route, in particular a low embankment parallel to the main line where the 60cm gauge would have had to run if it took this route (though this can be explained away easily enough). Nevertheless, and without getting bogged down in convoluted discussion of contending clues, I am at least partially persuaded that this could well have been the route taken by the 60cm gauge line. I suppose it would have terminated behind the station signal box in the yard of what is now the cable / electricity depot.

The locality is readily accessible. The clues are there for all to see, My conclusions may not be your conclusions. I would welcome dissenting opinions -but only after you've examined things on the ground.



WAGONS LITS IN EGYPT.

I am indebted to George Behrend and J.H. Price of Peterborough for a copy of an article produced between them for "Modern Transport" in 1962. Though specifically on Egypt (which was, of course, under British influence whereas Palestine was under Turkish domination until 1917, and had therefore fewer railways), the story impinges on later P.R. history, and I therefore include it here.

The Wagons-Lits Company's first interests in Egypt were in the operation of hotels, but in 1898 a contract was signed with the Egyptian State Railways for the provision of sleeping and dining cars. The two interests were combined in the issue of reduced-rate tickets to Upper Egypt for rail, sleeper and hotel accommodation, introduced at the turn of the century and still on issue today, though the hotels have long since been sold off.

To inaugurate the service in 1898, four existing cars (Nos. 546, 547, 592 and 671) were shipped out to Egypt to replace the sleeping cars of the State Railways, and three similar cars (593, 613 and 614) followed in 1901. Meanwhile, the first six cars specially designed for Egypt were completed in 1899, with double roofs and with slats placed over the double-glazed windows against the sun. The three sleeping cars (766 to 768) each had eight spacious two-berth compartments with the upper berth placed longitudinally, as in the Trans-Siberian cars, enabling passengers to lie down whenever they wished. Later arrivals were however of standard European types; Nos. 1774, 1777 and 1778 of 1908, No. 2072 of 1910 and No. 2168 of 1911, all of which, except No. 1777, were transferred to Palestine in 1921 - 25.

The 1899 dining cars, Nos. 763 to 765, were later joined by Nos. 811/812 (1900), 944 (1903), 987 (1904), 1859 (1908) and 2213 (1911), four of these being "single car classes" (i.e. unique) which helps to explain why the Wagons-Lits had no less than 485 different types of car. After successful results with No. 1899, all were equipped with the pioneer air-conditioning described in "History of Wagons-Lits": an electric pump driven by an accumulator charged from an axle-driven dynamo forced water drawn from a tank filled with 500kg. of ice through vertical tubes in a cylinder, before passing back to the top of the ice tank; this formed the water circuit. The air was drawn through the cylinder by a fan, and drawn into ventilating ducts along each side of the internal clerestory of the double roof. Sets of exhausters along the lower interior drew it up though the side walls and back to the cylinder, while other exhausters were fitted above the windows.

At first, the sleeping cars were attached to existing trains, but 1903 saw the inauguration of the *"Star of Egypt"* (never *"L'Etoile d'Egypte"*), a train-de-luxe composed wholly of Wagons-Lits stock which ran during the winter tourist season from Cairo to Aswan, taking 16½ hours for the 882 km. During the first war, General Allenby used the train as his H.Q. on the newly-built Palestine Railways, then (and again later) connected with the Egyptian system by a bridge across the Suez Canal at Kantara. Wagons-Lits therefore stayed on in Palestine, running two sleepers between Haifa and Kantara, joined in 1921 by three European-type diners (2302, 2346, 2351) of which one worked between Haifa and Jerusalem. All these operations came under the Cairo division, and after the creation of the *"Taurus Express"* in 1930 the timetable was arranged to connect with the road motor extension of the latter train from Tripoli to Haifa.

In 1926, a new contract provided for the introduction of Pullman cars, the first four of which arrived in Egypt on 26th. July. These British-built teak cars were designed to run singly, each having 21 seats and a kitchen; they were numbered VS (Voiture Salon) 2914 to 2917 and named *"Luxor"*, *"Aswan"*, *"Fayoum"* and *"Siwa"* respectively, with the names in brass Roman and Arabic characters. A stone model of *"Luxor"* can be seen in the Cairo Railway Museum, along with a wooden model of diner 2213. Their popularity brought an immediate demand for more Pullmans, two nameless kitchen cars built to the English loading gauge and numbered 54 and 58 in the duplicate list (formerly *"Hermione"* and *"Rainbow"*) being sent over from Italy, arriving on 4th. July 1927. In Egypt they were named *"Karnak"* and *"Cleopatra"*. (Further details and photographs of these cars are to be found in Behrend's book "Pullman in Europe".)

In 1926 the 3ft. 6in. gauge line from Aswan south to Luxor was converted to standard gauge, and through services inaugurated from Cairo to Luxor and El Shallal, connecting with the steamer for the Sudan. This extension and the growing tourist traffic led to an order for six steel Pullmans and eight steel S-type sleepers being placed with the Birmingham Carriage and Wagon Company, who had also built other Pullmans that ran in Egypt. The fourteen steel cars were shipped from South Wales on the S.S. *Belpameia*, arriving at Alexandria on 19th. December 1928. The sleepers were Nos. 3570 to 3577, in all-cream livery; the Pullmans were in the standard blue and cream, the names and numbers being 4171 *"Edfou"*, 4172 *"Bendera"*, 4173 *"Rosetta"*, 4174 *"Tutankh-Amen"*, 4175 *"Nefertari"* and 4176 *"Rameses"*. *"Edfou"*, *"Bendera"* and *"Rosetta"* were Parlour Cars and ran in couplages with the other three, which were Kitchen Cars. The Company was now able to run Pullmans from Cairo to Alexandria, Port Said and Luxor, the latter working being known as the *"Sunshine Express"*.

As the cars became due for overhaul, they lost their names and were repainted white. One more Pullman Car, No. 4088 (*"Le Sphinx"*) arrived in 1939; built originally by Leeds Forge, it had been equipped at St. Denis (Paris) Wagons-Lits works with full air-conditioning, the first Wagons-Lits car to have it. The name was removed soon after arrival.

By 1932 the Wagons-Lits had 39 cars in Egypt; in addition to the *"Star of Egypt"*, sleepers ran seasonally to Alexandria and in the ordinary train to Aswan, while the Company also provided service in some dining-cars owned by the railways. During the second world war, five of the teak cars were destroyed and services curtailed, whilst sleepers again ran through in military trains from Cairo to Haifa and possibly to Beirut. (Ed. note: I think not, but am not sure). Services reverted to normal after the war (except for the sleeper to Alexandria, which was not resumed), but in 1950 the Egyptian State Railways took over the Pullman and dining services, and took the vehicles into ESR stock. Pullman Kitchen Cars 54, 58, 2914 - 7, 4088 and 4171-3 became E.S.R. diners 3601 - 7 and 3611 -3, Parlour Cars 4174-6 became E.S.R. dining cars 3514-6, under which numbers they still (1962) serve the Republic Railways today. However, the railways incurred such losses in direct operation that in 1955 the catering concession was handed back to the Wagons-Lits again, apparently for a further ten years.

(Ed. notes: The article continues with further details of Egyptian operations, accidents etc., including the fact that it was possible to order bacon and eggs for breakfast, even though Egypt is a Moslem country ! There is no indication as to how and which cars were stranded in Israel in 1948, nor what happened to them. I have seen two photographs of a "special train" at Jerusalem and Kantara in 1917-8, formed of clerestory-roofed stock of almost Great Central railway appearance - in one of the pictures Lord Wingate is taking the salute at "the Jerusalem Station opening" - (though this may be an incorrect caption). I am tempted to believe that these coaches are the stock forming Allenby's Headquarters Train. However, at least some of the vehicles forming the train are six-wheelers.)

33:19 199 RAILWAY WORKSHOPS COMPANY, ROYAL ENGINEERS.

In October 1993 I spoke on the telephone to Mr. H. J. Mapp of Shrewsbury; what follows are from the notes I made at the time. There is still no adequate history of the various Railway Operating, Construction and Workshops Companies of the Royal Engineers - it is hoped this brief memoir will stimulate further details. The War Diary of the Unit is available at the P.R.O. in Kew.

"He was called up 15/12/39, to Longmoor Camp, and spent 6½ years - seven Xmas's - in the Army (12 months in 199 Coy.). 199 Coy. was formed at Bordon. Prior to call-up he had worked on the 'Joint' line at Craven Arms station as a Brakesman/Shunter; later he worked as a Passenger Guard based at Shrewsbury, and ended up as a T.T.I. (Travelling Ticket Inspector). He is now 75 years old - i.e. he was born ca. 1918.

On 6/5/40 the Company went to France with the B.E.F., but was evacuated six weeks later. On return from France they were sent on 'Indefinite Leave' - more-or-less disbanded - since there was nowhere for them to go. He was at home for five weeks, and was then recalled again to Donington (Derbyshire), re-kitted, and marched to Derby. Their HQ was on the football ground, and they went into civilian billets for six weeks, doing extensive training on the car-parks.

O.C. (Officer Commanding) was Major Lemon, son of the Works Manager at Crewe. He was later promoted to Cairo HQ, and from there sent back to the U.K. to help plan transport for the Second Front.

In Sept. '40 they were sent out to Haifa via the Cape, arriving at the end of November after a six-weeks voyage. They were billeted in the Arab Trades School.

He remained in 199 Rly..Wksps. Coy. until April 1941, when he was transferred to the newly-formed 974 Inland Waterways Transport Workshops Coy., (formed by Major Bostock, with Capt. James (later made a Major), and was moved to Egypt. They worked on ports as far as Tripoli. After the last major North African Campaign he returned to Port Tewfik, and stayed there until he left in January 1945. There they maintained the Z-Craft (which had Indian crews), tugs and lighters. There was a Slipway and a Floating Dock at Port Tewfik. He used to pilot an RCL with a crew of 4. Camp was at El Shatt. Locos were unloaded at El Shatt, where there was a 100T Floating Crane owned by the Suez Canal Company.

The Company's Butcher lived at Craven Arms, and died only recently. He is not in touch with any other former members of the unit."

33:20

THE TRANSPORTATION OF JEWS FROM TURKEY. By Wynford ('Doc') Fear.

I believe it would be about the end of 1943 when several men, locomotives, a crane and wagons had spent several weeks clearing up wrecks in the North African Desert. Trucks, tanks, guns of all types from both the enemy and the Allies, were brought near the railway and, when we had a "Line Clear" possession, we would pick up all this equipment - and there was a lot of it. Typically of the Army with its attitude of "Hurry up and Wait", one day a truck arrived from H.Q. to collect my fireman and I to go away. At the camp, Control said, "You've got a special job". No details. Eventually five drivers and five firemen (including us) were to catch the passenger train for Egypt. Included in the posting was a Sergeant (none-too-bright !) and a cook.

Ten hours later we arrived in Cairo. We got something to eat and expected some camp for the night but, no, we were put straight onto the Palestine train; there were big question marks over where we were going, but no-one would or could tell us. Ah well, we were Passengers - so why worry ? Over the Suez Canal, to Kantara East, where we got food, and then across the Sinai Desert again - through Gaza and Lydda to Haifa. More food. Now for the first time I went over the H.B.T. (The Haifa Beirut Tripoli Railway, opened in 1942). The American Whitcomb diesel locomotives we had been using on the Western Desert Railway were now being used by South Africans on the H.B.T.

Through Beirut and on to Tripoli. We decided we did not like the H.B.T. Railway, but little did we realise what was ahead. Food at Tripoli and there we saw the oldest of steam engines in service - Stephenson link motion outside of the side rods, and double-acting piston valve, all outside, built in France 1912 - 1914. This was a French-built railway - the Damascus, Homs et Prolongements (D.H.P.). We now set off from Tripoli going North and after hours of climbing we arrived at Homs. We were given some sandwiches at Homs and here discovered that Homs was an important junction; Looking south you could see the right-hand fork went to Tripoli and the Lebanon, and to the left was for Rayak, thence connecting for Damascus and eventually to Amman and Medina.

On again to Aleppo, for yet another hundred miles. Now we left the train and it was very cold, but we ended up in a five-room billet next door to the Italian Hospital in Aleppo. Beds and mosquito nets had been arranged for us, which was surprising, but next morning we went to the L.S.B. Railway

workshop. Here we had to learn the Rules of the L.S.B. (Lignes Syriennes de Baghdad), which were written in French, so they were translated first into Arabic and then into English, and some peculiar instances occurred. For example, To come from the Loco Shed, after the whistle the signal man would show a black flag, whereas a green flag gave a train on the main line the 'right of way'. O.K. - so what happens at night ? Do you wait for a Black Light ? So many things which we accept as normal had to be ironed out. The L.S.B. drivers did not fancy us learning their job, and no-one had taken the trouble to explain why we were there. Our locos were supposed to be there the next week, but they never came. We were there for now to "learn the road".

My first trip on the Railway made me feel that there were better places than Northern Syria. I forget most names, but the first section was a ready-made 'Big Dipper'. The section was fair but at one point you had to stop in section, pull a pipe out of the wall and fill up with water. Yes, "She's-a-very-good-water". There were no valves - the water was normally just pouring down a drain. Then you came to a place called Katma. (55 km from Aleppo). Here we had to wait. I now noticed that the train was loose-coupled and there were boxes at the end of some wagons, and that there was a man in each box. When the train driver blew "Three" each brakesman would screw his brake on; when the driver whistled "Two" they would release the brakes. Now I looked and our loco had gone ! "Don't worry", George (my fireman) said, "I understand that he's gone to look if the line is safe". I gave up, and just sat and waited.

After nearly an hour a train came in, and our loco was acting as Banking Engine. Now our loco, together with the train loco, got onto or hooked up to the front of our train. Away we went, downhill all the way, whistling "Three", all brakes on, including those on both locos'. The gradients were 1 in 20, 1 in 30, for a while 1 in 19. No sir, they had warned me at Longmoor (the Training Camp in England) that there were worse railways; here I had found one !

When we reached Kurt-Kulac (73 km from Aleppo) there was a train waiting there; now the engine which had braked us down the hill acted as banker for the train which was waiting.

You must remember the peculiar attitude of the L.S.B. drivers, which was because they were afraid we were going to take their jobs. We could not speak their language but felt again that the people in charge had let us down.

It was dark as we left Raju, the last station before the end of the line. About one mile flat, then downhill at 1 on 30. I felt we were going too fast, but it was some time before the driver called for the brakes. We would be doing 60 mph. as we went into a tunnel; Now the Driver kept whistling. About three-quarters of a mile in tunnel, and as we emerged from it a man was holding a green light. It seemed as if we came out of that tunnel in complete silence, then almost instantly into another tunnel. It wasn't until the return trip that I could see why. Between the two tunnels was a chasm or canyon of up to 1,000 feet deep, and between the tunnels was a bridge 70 to 100 feet long. The only thing the bridge consisted of was two R.S.J.'s (Rolled Steel Joists); several lengths were riveted together but the width was exactly one sleeper wide. When you went over it you looked down and you saw Nothing. It felt as if you were airborne !

Coming out of the second tunnel it felt as if we were on a rough road and against the horizon I could see a small hill. We circled the hill but instead of leaning towards the right to go around a right-hand curve we were leaning to the left. The Driver kept blowing 'Three' on the whistle, which told me we were in trouble. Ahead I could see lights which were the station and someone was swinging a green light. We went through the border station of Meidan-Ekbes (117 km) doing at least 40 mph and stopped at least a half-mile into the next section. The Driver reversed and pushed back into the station, and then I saw the border signs of Turkey and Syria. I said to George, "If we had been in uniform, you know we should have been interned for the duration of the war because we were in a neutral country." That really cheered him up.

The only food we had was tea and sugar so I had to buy the native bread, Chapattis, and that was our evening meal. It was now about 9 pm. The air was full of mosquitoes although it was cold and I did not fancy having to stop here for the night. We now sat in a room for train crews, with only a cheap hurricane lamp for light.

It would be about 11.30 pm. when a Sergeant-Major came into the room and calmly remarked, "Ah, there you are, I've looked all over for you." My answer was, "Why ?" He now started to tell us why we had been sent; we had to pick up "the train coming in" and get it away as quickly as possible, "secret cargo", etc. After all this, I said, "First complaint, where is our food?" "Don't know anything about that", was his answer. I was getting mad so I said, "As a senior N.C.O. you should know." "I'll see what I can do, where is your engine ?" he answered. It was now my turn to look dumb.

"Engine ?", I said, "Don't know anything about that." Eventually it turned out that we were to have brought an engine to pick up a train of Jewish refugees from Turkey.

After much talk it was decided the L.S.B. engine would be used to take this train to Aleppo. The train from Turkey came in, and it consisted of 22 cattle trucks. One door was open and I was shocked at what was inside; about 20 women and ten children, all looking frozen. It was 6 am. and very cold. This wagon had a two-foot gap five feet above the floor for air, which was now ice-cold. There was only a bucket for all purposes.

We pulled out of Meidan-Ekbes at about 7 am. with the L.S.B. crew driving; now it was my chance to look at the railway. The bridge over the chasm or canyon was guarded by a man with a flag, and if the Driver could see the flag he knew the bridge was still there, because during the war, "Who knows ?" It was quite a climb from the Turkish frontier to the first station. We stopped for steam once, but it didn't seem to worry anyone.

After five hours we arrived at Aleppo, and the train was shunted into a siding with a wide platform. On the other side were passenger coaches from the E.S.R. (Egyptian State Railways). All the refugees from Eastern Europe were now bathed in special showers. All clothes were burned, and each one was given British A.T.S. (Womens Forces) uniforms, fed, given extra food, put into passenger coaches and eventually went south.

My fireman and I did this trip four times from Aleppo to the Turkish frontier. We learned that the Jewish refugees were escaping from Eastern Europe, Bulgaria, Hungary and Greece and making their way to Turkey; Since Turkey was neutral the Jews were safe once they had arrived there. The British Government arranged for Turkey to send these people to Syria but the Arabs did not know what was happening.

After my fourth trip to the Turkish border I was taken ill and I went into the Italian Hospital next door to our billet in Aleppo. I thought I had a cold but the Sister took a blood test and made me wait; in half an hour I was in bed because I had malaria.

I can just remember the next day, but I was put on an Ambulance Train and taken south to Saida (i.e. Sidon) to the 43 General Hospital. Here I lay for two weeks on the Danger List, but got over it and returned to the Company at Beirut.

I was allowed two days to recuperate, and then back to work. The Jewish refugees were still coming and we were taking empty coaches north or taking full coaches south. My fireman and I took one load of the refugees south from Beirut to Lydda where a driver from the 189 R.O.C. (R.E.) (Railway Operating Company, Royal Engineers) took the train on and he told me, when I asked where they were going to, that they were destined for El Shatt.

Now this was on the eastern side, at the north end of the Red Sea at the south end of the Suez Canal; from the eastern end of the Firdan Bridge a line had been built running parallel with the Canal on the eastern side. It was single track and I drove on it several times to El Shatt. A tent city there became a sight to see - I saw it from Suez. I often wonder what happened to the Jews in there. I would like to hear from one because the Arabs did not want them and therefore the British could not let them loose in Palestine.

The millions spent, the long hours worked, the machines used which had to be repaired - I often wonder - was it worth it, for them and for us ?

33:21: USATC "Middle East" 2-8-2 W D. 71103 on shed at Haifa. 2/10/45.
(Photo: R.J. Ireson.)

33:22 THE EL TOR LIGHT RAILWAY. By Paul Cotterell.

In 1976, when on an extended hiking and climbing trip around the Sinai Peninsula, we stopped off at El Tor. This place is on the south-west coast of the Peninsula, and whatever fame it may possess is due to its being a staging point for pilgrims en route to Mecca for the Haj. There is a bath house where the dust of the journey could be temporarily washed away. back on the bus after completing our own ablutions we passed a small jetty with derelict rails laid along it. A light railway, probably of 60cm. gauge. I was left with the impression that this line would have been used for loading and unloading small dhows or other small craft, and that the wagons were propelled by hand. Subsequent correspondence with Andrew Wilson, who knows this area better, suggests that something more substantial may once have existed here.

Andrew came up with a photocopy of a train, herewith reproduced. He noted that the source was a 1975 reproduction of the Arthur Koppel Locomotive Catalogue No. 786 which had been issued from their London office. The original seems to date from 1906-7; it included a photo of an O&K loco built in 1906, but Arthur Koppel died in 1908 and his business then merged into Orenstein & Koppel.

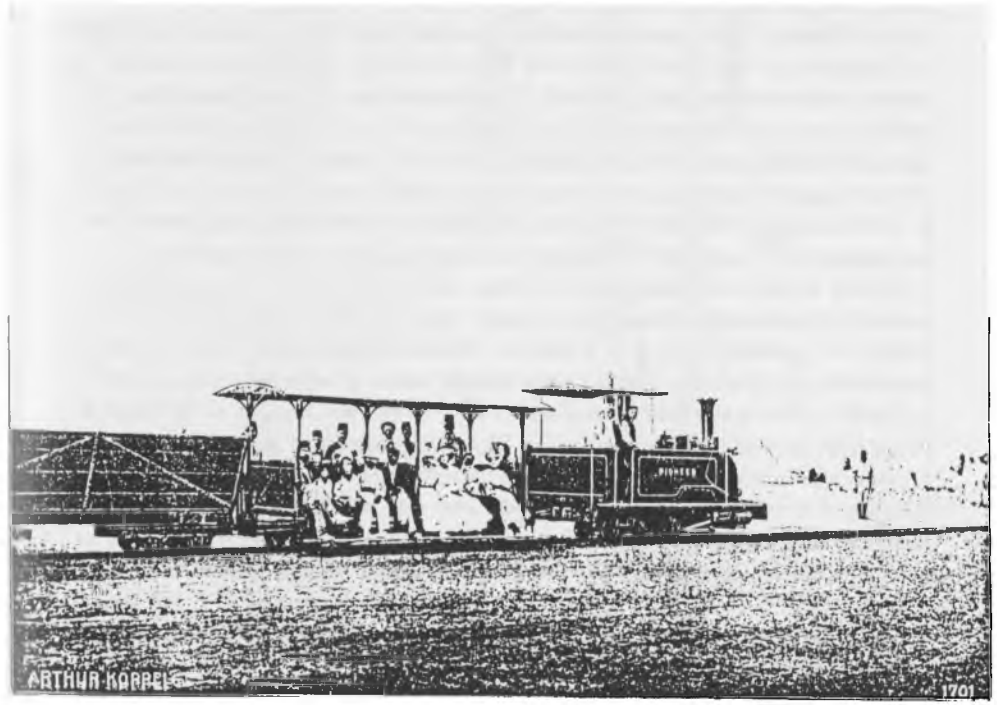
The illustration shows a neat little 0-4-2 tank hauling a toastrack coach and high-sided bogie wagon. The loco is named PIONEER. There are some tents in the right background and what might be soldiers standing around (one of the uniformed figures is standing to attention.) Most of the seated passengers on the coach do not appear to be Muslims, though fezzes are worn by the attendants standing beyond.

Andrew was able to make a more detailed study on the ground at El Tor, but "with negative results so far as any firm evidence of railways is concerned." However, he came across "some interesting old British military buildings at the harbour". Hew also reports that hills to the north of El Tor could be the same as in the Arthur Koppel photo. (Unfortunately these do not show up in the photocopy.)

In an attempt to find out more, I circulated these findings among the 'Harakevet' subscribers with a hard-core interest in industrial and light railways. Ray Ellis told me that PIONEER was Kerr Stuart 636 of 1898 and that it had been supplied to Francis Allen in Egypt. This information is now presented to a wider readership in the hope that someone may be able to add further details.

Certain doubts remain about the above information. I think I'm correct in saying that Arthur Koppel did not build locos, but affixed their plates to engines built by other firms. Nor was every loco which carried a Kerr Stuart plate actually built by Kerr Stuart. I wonder, too, about the caption to that catalogue illustration: 'El Tor Light Railway, Isthmus of Suez, Arabia.' It does not seem very precise to me, and there is more than one El Tor in the general region.

One final query. I am ignorant of the history of Orenstein & Koppel, but have been told that the firm was, at least in part, Jewish owned. If this is so then what happened to it during the Nazi period ?
[Ed. Most such firms would have been compulsorily "Aryanised", but I too would be glad of any further details.]



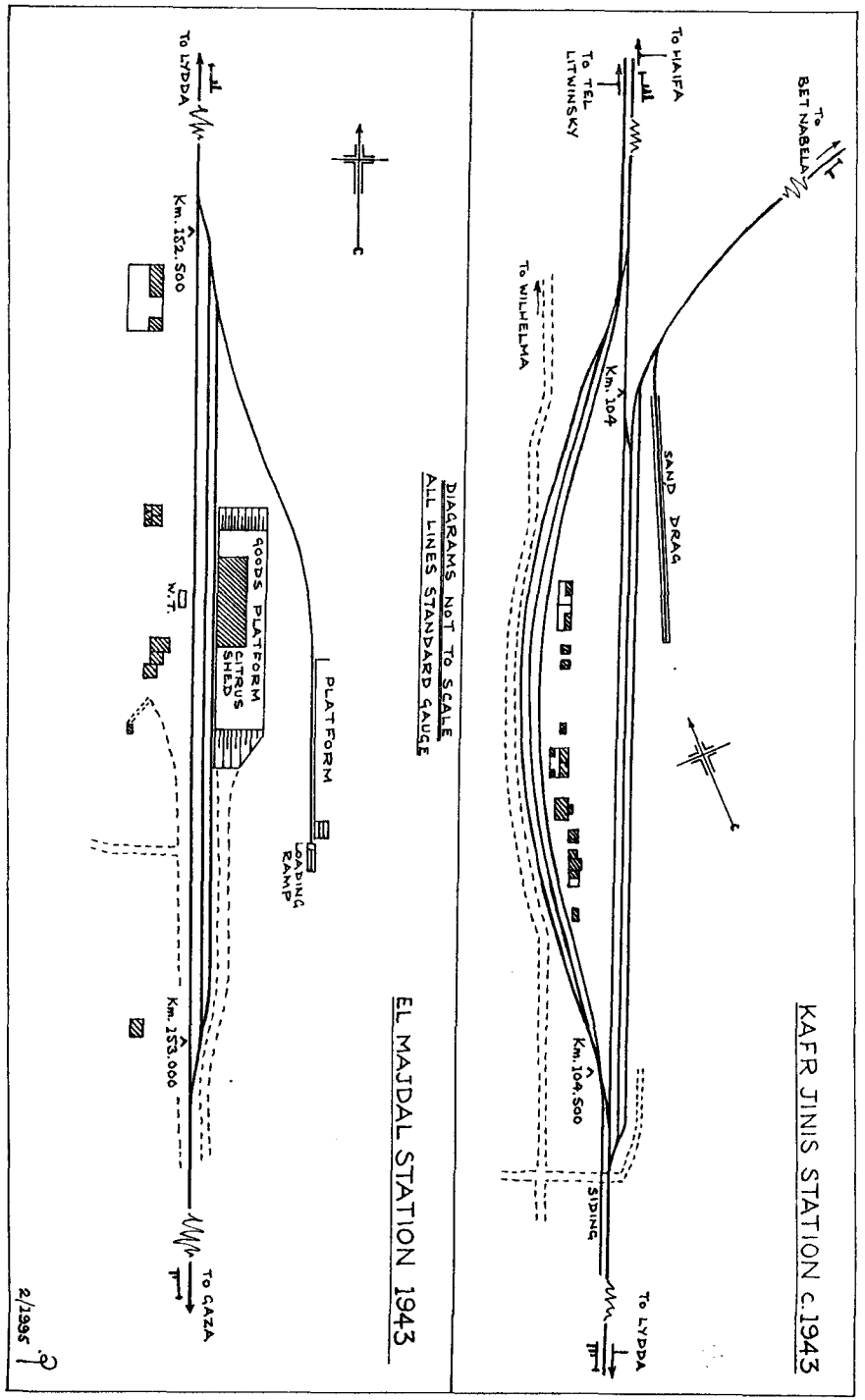
El Tor Light Railway, Isthmus of Suez, Arabia

33:23 TWO MAIN LINE STATIONS. By Paul Cotterell.

A couple more layout diagram, courtesy of the PR Ways & Works Dept. draughtsmen. One has to treat these drawings with a certain scepticism for the originals frequently show aspects that were only proposed at the time and there is no guarantee that every proposal was actually implemented. The word 'CANCELLED' stamped across may of the originals gives me perturbations as well. Still, I believe these diagrams to be accurate enough in most, if not all essential elements; and they are surely better than nothing.

Both the stations depicted here show signs of wartime additions. I think the siding at the east end of El Majdal station, with its platform and loading ramp, was put in at the request of the army. Kafr Jinis shows more evidence of the military. The three curved loops to the west of the station buildings are apparently associated with the Tel Litwinsky (sic) branch which is known to have been laid in WWII. This branch can be seen paralleling the main line north of the station before heading off in a northwest direction. A curiosity which seems to be common to a lot of standard gauge stations on PR (to judge from diagrams at least) is that while proper provision is made to get trains into stations by the use of home semaphore signals, there does not appear to be any way of getting them out again by using starters !

While in the neighbourhood of Kafr Jinis it is worth remarking on a recently discovered scheme for a branch line from Wilhelma (see 25:13 for sketch of general area.) A Palestine Military Railways drawing dated September 1920 shows that a fairly simple station, with two loops, was to be built on the main line immediately east of the settlement of Wilhelma. From here is was intended to lay an 8km. long standard gauge branch in a northwesterly direction to somewhere called Mulebbis. I don't recall seeing this place mentioned elsewhere, and have nor the faintest idea for what purpose this branch line was intended. It would, however, have run more or less parallel to, and north of, the Tel Litvinsky branch which was later actually laid. Can anyone say where Mulebbis was exactly ? A surviving longitudinal survey of the whole length of the intended branch does not help to pinpoint its terminus.



REPARATIONS.

One reason why Israel Railways seemed to be stocked with a lot of German rolling stock - Esslingen diesel shunters and railcars, O & K coaches etc. - was very simple; this equipment formed part of the 'Reparations Payments' ("Shilumim") paid by West Germany to Israel in a form of financial compensation for some of the suffering caused to the Jews of Europe, before the State was even formed - thus a form of 'Foreign Aid' with guilt as a stimulus. This procedure was not without opponents - from Israel as well as from Germany - and an excellent book on the subject is "West German Reparations to Israel" by Nicholas Balabkins, published by Rutgers University Press, 1971, ISBN 0-8135-0691-3. The English is sometimes a little stilted, but the text is clear. Pages 243-245 deal with "Equipment for Israel's Railways":

"Without an adequate transportation system, economic development is virtually impossible. Mountains, deserts, rivers, jungles, distance itself, impede the movement of goods and people, so that exchanges are restricted to local markets, which are narrow and offer little scope for specialization. Without specialization production costs remain high. To unite the many local markets into a national market, an adequate transportation system - railroads, canals, and roads - is a prime necessity.

In 1952, Dr. Trone's report on the use of Shilumim funds stressed the need not only for the build-up of Israel's electricity generating capacity but also for the expansion and qualitative upgrading of the entire railroad system. He noted that the life of a bus or a truck is one-third that of railway rolling stock and that railway operating costs were considerably lower than those of buses, especially for fuel and spare parts. Consequently, he suggested the introduction of electric trains for suburban passenger traffic, and Diesel or steam engines for the proposed Negev line. He admonished the economic planners to locate new industrial plants so that rail sidings and feeder lines could be arranged easily, and he deplored that this aspect of industrial planning had been neglected in the past. To increase the cargo volume shipped by rail, Dr. Trone called for considerable qualitative improvement of Israel's railroads. For instance, he wanted to speed up the turnover time of a box car from the 1952 average of 12 days to 5 days. That improvement could be achieved by providing open and closed storage facilities at all railway stations and by installing certain handling equipment. For the future transport of Negev potash and phosphates, he recommended the building of ropeways: potash from Sodom to Mamshit, phosphates from Machtesh to Mamshit. These would then move from

Mamshit by rail via Beersheba to the new southern port, Ashdod.

The total investment needed for railway development was estimated at $44 million and I£ 18 million in local currency. From 1954 to 1962, Israel Railways received German-made equipment amounting to $12.7 million (more than DM 50 million) from the Shilumim funds. For the new track to Beersheba only German-made rails were used, and half of the Jerusalem - Tel Aviv line was replaced with German rails. In the marshalling yards, Shilumim-financed shunting engines increased the turnover considerably. Four hundred new boxcars were acquired, ranging from 25 to 50 tons capacity, which raised substantially the overall cargo-carrying capacity. In 1962, the railways carried two and a half times more cargo that in 1953.

Of particular significance was the electrical signalling and coordinating equipment installed in 1958. Since Israeli railroads are single-track, the installation of such equipment along the Tel Aviv - Haifa line made express trains possible for the first time. This innovation not only permitted a greater number of cars on each train but it improved safety as well. The installation of the Automatic Block System and centralized traffic control set the stage for considerable improvements in efficiency. However, not all Shilumim-financed acquisitions were proper and successful. For instance, the twelve self-propelled railcars acquired in 1955 turned out to be unsuitable because of difficulties with traction power and hydraulic transmission. High operating and maintenance costs led to their demise in 1959.

In addition to boxcars and self-propelled cars, Israel Railways also acquired a number of passenger cars, which replaced the forty-year old coaches. The resulting improvement in passenger service led to only a slight increase in the number of passengers travelling by rail. In 1959 the increase was 3 per cent, "slightly more than the average annual increase during the last three years, but still not exceeding the rate of growth of the population." Many of these cars are still in operation today. In 1962 50 per cent of the railway passenger-carrying capacity consisted of the Shilumim-financed coaches.

Even though Israel is a small country where short hauls predominate and trucks have an edge over railroads, the expansion and modernization of railways linked up Israel's empty South with the North, that is, with Haifa. By 1963 potash, phosphates, citrus fruit and grain went north by rail, and in the opposite direction the rails moved supplies and equipment into the Negev desert.

In spite of the substantial qualitative upgrading of Israel Railways through Shilumim acquisitions, annual operating deficits not only continued but mounted. There were many reasons, but for the record a few in passing

were stiff competition from trucks, a very high labour component per unit of output, artificially low tariffs granted for such export items as citrus and minerals, and fare concessions to certain categories of passengers.

Nor was the thorough modernization of the railways accompanied by an improvement in operating costs. Because Histadrut officials virtually forbade the dismissal of displaced workers, they had to be retained. As early as 1956, the Bank of Israel reported that "the operational changes in the railways make it imperative to find a solution to the problem of rationalization. Otherwise, the railways will not be able to continue reducing their costs through the use of the modern equipment which has been put at their disposal with this very end in view." Apart from these institutional difficulties, Mr. M. Savidor, general manager of the Israel Railways, observed in 1962 that "in general we are very satisfied with the quality of the German goods". He felt that "the busy cargo and passenger traffic, the modernity of the rail system, the comfortable journey by rail, all these were introduced with Reparations goods." He termed these innovations "a revolution" which is still incomplete because 70 percent of Israel's "rolling stock is antiquated and most of our lines are equipped with 40 year old rails and nineteenth century signalling installations." Mr. Savidor's impressive comment should not be overlooked in evaluating Shilumim's contribution to Israel's material infrastructure."

33:25: Carmel Beach, Haifa; Saturday 2/3/96. Precast concrete bridge units ready to be put in place on the following weekend, as a track machine works on ballast on the I.R. main line - work is in progress on doubling the tracks.

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