

“And in the beginning, there was a typewriter and a copier”.

## “HaRakevet” Issue No. 1

The very first issue of HaRakevet was printed by Rabbi Rothschild at home on a typewriter, copied on a copier and sent to a number of interested individuals and institutions. It is reproduced here, somewhat degraded to fit the file size limits. The quality of the copy precludes the use of OCR to reduce the file size, as we have done with some of the later issues.

We are indebted to Uri Ben Rehav for the loan of this and other early issues (1 to 7) which we did not have, and we hope to add the rest of these soon. His (nearly) complete collection of all the issues of “HaRakevet” will be of invaluable assistance in completion of this project.

It is incredible to see what Israel Railways looked like in 1989, and compare this with the situation today. In the next issue (Issue 2) we will include a reproduction of the April 1989 timetable, which shows a total of about 30 trains per day. In 2007, the number of trains per day is close to **10 times larger**.

Read on, and have fun.

# HARAKEVET

הרכבת

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## EDITORIAL STATEMENT.

Welcome to Issue 1 of "HaRakevet" ! This newsletter is for anyone interested in the past or current activities of the railways in or around Israel - whether the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway, the Hedjaz, the Sinai Military Railway, the Palestine Railways, Israel Railways, industrial lines, wartime lines, the Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli, and so on.

Not a great deal has been published on the railways of this area - an area so complicated that one even has to be careful what name is used when. Hugh Hughes' book on "Middle East Railways" (published by Continental Railway Circle, 1982) gives a good overall background; Paul Cotterell's "The Railways of Palestine and Israel" (available from Rick Turret, Turret Publishing, 5, Byron Close, Abingdon, Oxon.) is excellent, and is the definitive work - but Paul tells me he has acquired a lot more information since it was written, and that a second edition would include several amendments and additions. A book on the Hedjaz Railway, by Mr. Turret himself, is due out very soon.

In the meantime, various individuals are continuing private researches, mostly with no intention of publishing in any formal manner. It is hoped that this newsletter will enable enthusiasts and researchers to share information, pool resources, pose and answer questions and stimulate further interest. There is no Copyright - please feel free to photocopy and distribute any issue as much as you like. If you have any material, questions etc., please send them to the above address.

This newsletter will be "spasmodic" - that is, it will appear whenever I have enough material and enough time to get it together ! Issues will be numbered, as will paragraphs, so it will be possible to refer to an item as "1.15" or "3.6" when updating or correcting. Likewise, each issue will be something of a Miscellany - but I hope you enjoy it.

### 1. Railway Museum at Haifa East.

This is a small Museum, with a lot of potential. It suffers from a combination of nil funding and a lack of clear overall direction - plus the fact that almost all interesting old motive power and rolling stock has been scrapped ! It is based in an original stone goods shed at Haifa Mizrach (Haifa East), plus a new shed and a section of yard in between. Small exhibits are in the stone shed, including early documents and some models, plus basic explanatory exhibits to show the average Israeli child what a signal or sleeper is. Outside are 4wh. 20T van no. 7031 and 4wh. Brake Van 1406, and a trolley - plus one wheelset from a Baldwin 4-6-0. Inside are Esslingen 0-6-0 Diesel shunter No. 212 (built 1955), Deutz 0-4-0 Diesel Shunter "No. 201" (This is actually No. 203, works. no. 57063 of 1958), 4wh. brake van no. 1419, 15T 6wh. flat wagon no. 3601 (formerly of the Egyptian State Railways, ESR); 6wh. coach, ex. ESR, no. 4720, painted as an ambulance vehicle, and BRCW Saloon Coach No. 98 of 1922, beautifully-restored inside and out. (This had once been used at an Army camp as a hut!). A narrow-gauge (3'6") exhibit is Hedjaz Railway hogie box van no. BB1006, of 1909. There is a space reserved for Krauss 0-6-0T No. 10 (the last surviving steam locomotive in Israel), which on 2/3/89 was observed on a flat wagon, cosmetically-restored, inside Qishon Works. Apparently some of the cab fittings used to "restore" this loco have been taken from two derelict Cowans Sheldon

Steam Cranes in the scrapyard at Qishon - details below.

Opening Times: According to a leaflet produced by the Haifa Tourism Development Association, dated April 1988, the Museum is open on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10am - 1pm, and admission is free. Buses 17, 42 and 93 pass by.

Please note: Haifa East is still an active station. Despite a sign at the entrance declaring that it is closed to passengers, passenger trains to and from Nahariyya still stop there for passengers to board! There are also extensive carriage sidings and freight yards.

## 2. EILAT.

According to the free tourism booklets available at hotels, e.g. "This Week in Israel", there is a miniature train here - viz:-

*Eilat Express - Miniature passenger train on Eilat's Northern Beach. Starts near Galei Eilat Hotel, passes lagoon, hotels, Mini-Golf, Pago Pago & Luna Park. Tickets from hotel reception or on the train. 059-74364.*

Before anyone makes the trip especially to see this - beware! A congregant has given me a slide of this "train", and it is a standard road-train of the type found in large parks, garden-festivals and the like - open cars with verandah covers, pulled by a tractor unit.

The Railway has not got to Eilat yet! However, it is said that during the 1989 Elections, the Likud party used an Esslingen Railcar coach body as a mobile rallying-point, mounted on a road-trailer flatbed. Does anyone have any details or a picture? If true, this would be the first railway carriage ever to get to Eilat!

## 3. TABA.

According to Paul Cottérell, there are two 60cm. gauge diesel or petrol locos here, on plinths, near Rafi Nelson's village in this resort area, handed back by Israel to Egypt in March '89 - but he has not been able to get there to confirm. Neither have I. Does anyone have details or pictures? They are rumoured to have come from the Timna Copper Mines a little to the North of Eilat. Is there still a railway system there? Please let me know. (P.S. More info: Deutz 56346, & 57633 of 1962).

## 4. JERUSALEM : LIBERTY BELL GARDEN. The Train Theatre.

On 6/8/81 I noted in this park, just opposite the railway station, a newly-landscaped area and two "bodies" - a coach (German railcar type) No. 927 internally-gutted and with some windows sealed, and a goods van, still in green livery, No. 20.072 X, "in line ahead" - this latter formerly numbered 7083, tare 11,200kg. Wiring and plumbing was being installed, and the three people working told me that they'd got it "through a newspaper - how else?"! It was to become a puppet theatre, with the van used as a store.

By 14/8/81 the coach was painted drab green undercoat, and was in use as a theatre; by 17/8/81 it had been repainted mid-blue, with a light-blue roof, and the panels sealing the windows painted red. The wagon was also repainted blue and red by 26/8/81.

On 7/3/89 I paid a further visit. The coach is now painted a deep red, with a grey stripe. Landscaping has been completed and shrubbery has matured. The van body had disappeared - where? Why? - and been replaced by half of a railcar driving coach, with the cab pointing towards the Theatre coach - also painted red and grey.

A sign at the entrance reads:

"The Train Theater. Patrons: Paula and Joel Fridlander, Doron Foundation, for Education and Welfare, Susan and Martin Lipton, Lite and Arnold L. Sabin." Tickets were advertised at 8 N.I.S. Two railcar-type bogies were still present in the "back siding" in Jerusalem station - presumably the second coach was brought by rail and cut on site to match the available space. The cab and five bays survive.

5. JERUSALEM: SIGNAL BOX.

This concrete structure at the station throat was visited 7/3/89. The box is hardly busy any more - there is a daily freight each way and daily passenger each way, per day.

The box holds an 18-lever frame. Levers are:

1. Red. (Signal).
2. Black. (Point).
3. Blue. (Lock).
4. Red.
5. Red.
6. Black.
7. Red.
8. Black.
9. to 12: White. (Spare).
13. Red.
14. Blue.
15. Black.
- 16 to 18 : Red.

Unfortunately the track-diagram has vanished, and it was not possible to ascertain which lever worked which signal.

There is a block instrument, made by the Railway Signal Co., Liverpool, serial no. S 6765. The block now extends to Bet Shemesh (formerly known as Artuf or Har Tuv), and a downhill train takes 50 minutes to reach this. Trains are of course in radio contact as well. The signalman has to contact also the level-crossing keeper at Derech Bethlehem and the signalman in the modern cabin at the level crossing at km. 85 (General Pierre Koenig Road).

6. JERUSALEM LEVEL CROSSINGS.

a). Derech Bethlehem. (km. 86.2.)

Though most through traffic now takes the parallel Derech Hebron this is still a fairly busy road. The Level crossing consists of a small hut, an outdoor frame and two drooping, faded barrier poles (without "skirts").

The frame and mechanism are stamped "Tyers Signals Ltd. P.R. 1927. Darlaston". The signal lever (or lock ?) is stamped "Tyers Co. Ltd., London & Carlisle PR". Warning lights and bells are worked from the signal box, 100 m. away. Warning signs (featuring a steam-outline loco !) are supported by what looks like narrow-gauge rail. A metal fence is held up by rail stamped: "J.J. Angleur 2 1892 AB" and "Angleur AB JJ". Is this original Jaffa-Jerusalem rail of 1892 ?

The road here was resurfaced on 25/7/81.

b). Koenig. (km. 85.2).

This is a fairly busy road branching off Emek Refaim and serving Baka. The road is wide, and is protected by modern plastic barriers (of French type), worked from a two-storey signal cabin. The crossing is protected from uphill trains by two colour-light signals - a two-aspect distant at km. 85.05 and a home-plus-distant:



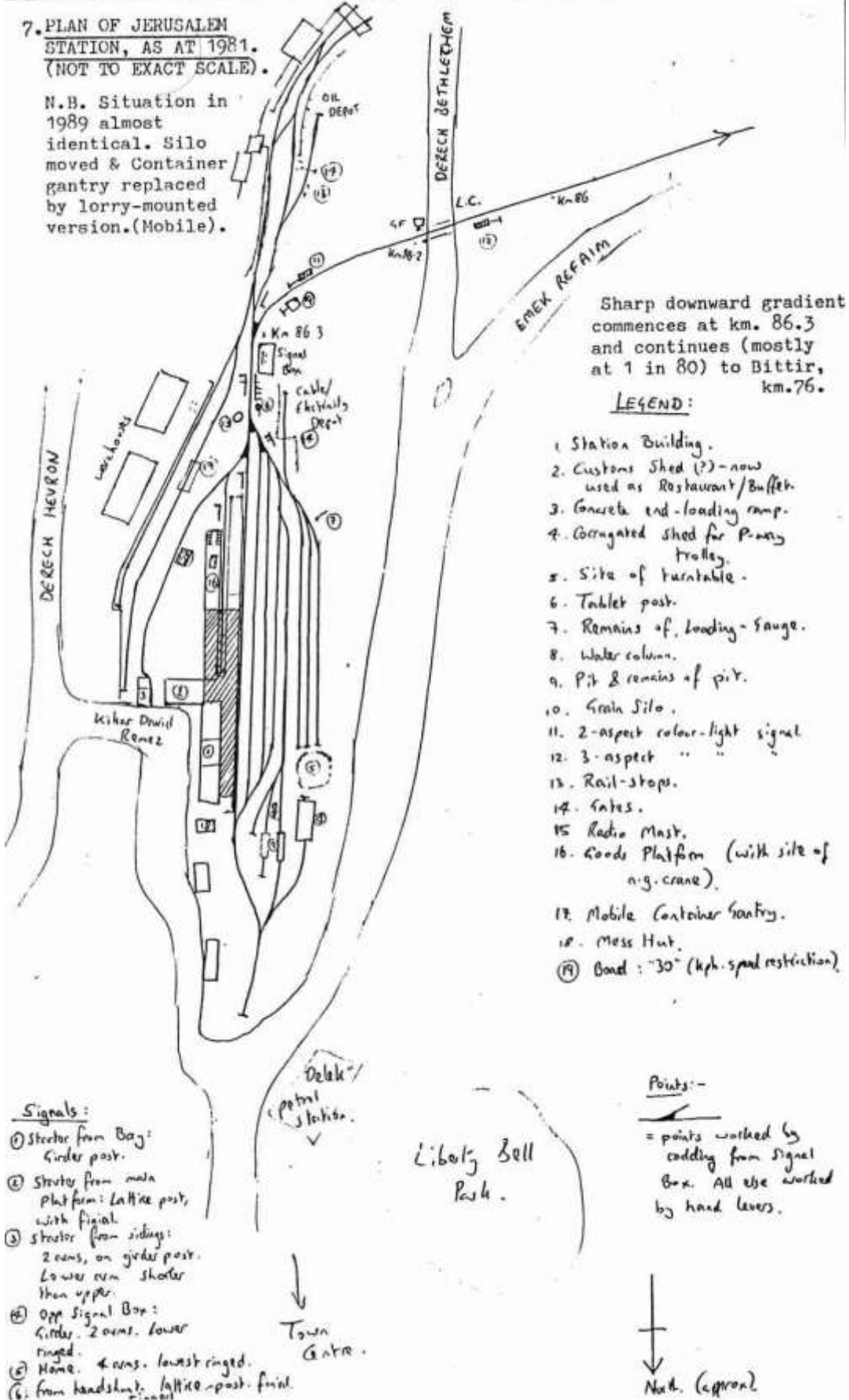
c). Bet Safafa. (km. 83.45.)

This village was at one period divided between Israel and Jordan, the railway forming the border. The level crossing is over a narrow road, protected by lights and bells. There are remains of what seems like a Tablet holder on the R. side, (travelling downhill).

- d). The new road to Gilo crosses the line at km. 82.9. This still effectively marks the end of the built-up area. Not a level crossing at all, but a dual-carriageway bridge.

7. PLAN OF JERUSALEM STATION, AS AT 1981. (NOT TO EXACT SCALE).

N.B. Situation in 1989 almost identical. Silo moved & Container gantry replaced by lorry-mounted version. (Mobile).



Sharp downward gradient commences at km. 86.3 and continues (mostly at 1 in 80) to Bittir, km. 76.

LEGEND:

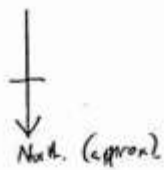
- 1. Station Building.
- 2. Customs Shed (?) - now used as Restaurant/Buffer.
- 3. Concrete end-loading ramp.
- 4. Corrugated shed for P-way trolley.
- 5. Site of turntable.
- 6. Tablet post.
- 7. Remains of Loading-gauge.
- 8. Water column.
- 9. Pit & remains of pit.
- 10. Grain Silo.
- 11. 2-aspect colour-light signal
- 12. 3-aspect "
- 13. Rail-stops.
- 14. Gates.
- 15. Radio Mast.
- 16. Goods Platform (with site of n.g. crane).
- 17. Mobile Container Gantry.
- 18. Mess Hut.
- Ⓐ Bond: "30" (kph. speed restriction)

Signals:

- ① Struts from Bay: Girder post.
- ② Struts from main Platform: Lattice post, with signal.
- ③ Struts from sidings: 2 rows, on girder post. Lower row shorter than upper.
- ④ Opp Signal Box: Girder. 2 rows. Lower ringed.
- ⑤ Home: 4 rows. lowest ringed.
- ⑥ from handshunt: lattice-post. final.

Points:-

= points worked by coddling from Signal Box. All else worked by hand levers.



Liberty Bell Park.

Town Centre.

Derek Petal Station.

## 8. THE ESSLINGEN RAILCARS.

In 1956 Israel Railways bought a series of diesel multiple units built by Esslingen in Germany, incorporating Maybach V-08 engines and transmission systems. Unfortunately Paul Cotterell's book (p.92) does not say how many vehicles were in each unit, and how many units in all were bought. It is clear that, as d.m.u.'s, they were a failure - though similar units appear to have worked on DB with greater success. Bought with "Tashlumim" (Reparations Money), there was even a jocular feeling that they kept breaking down as revenge on the Jews! Eventually the engines were taken out and they were used as sets of coaching-stock, with the former engine compartment rebuilt as a Buffet.

How many were built, how many still remain, and how were they numbered? All have been withdrawn now, but a large number seem to survive in various guises. The following have been noted - other sightings and more details will be gladly received.

On 23/7/81, at Tel Aviv Darom (South) station:

In Platform 1: 2 trailers, in good condition:

Nos. 15 קב, 17 קב, 18 קב.

In Platform 4: In poor condition (windows boarded, either loosely coupled or uncoupled, in no formation). From buffers:

Nos: 2. (Cab facing buffers); 19 קב; 17 קב;  
10 א (Cab facing throat); 3 (Cab facing buffers);  
16 קב.

2/7/81. Qyriat Malachi (on road from Iatron to Ashkelon).

A cab-unit coach body in a field by an industrial area.

Spring '82. Coach half-off bogies at B'nei Barak. No. 2 קב.

One at Lod - repainted, used as an office.

Coach in use as "HaKaron" ("The Coach") Restaurant near the coast at Bat Galim, Haifa - painted brown and beige. (N.B. This had disappeared by 1989, as had all the stock mentioned above - except for Qyriat Malachi coach, not checked; Coach 9 קב already noted at Jerusalem park).

A tour of most of the system in March 1989 noted the following:

Rear of Qishon works: Cab unit 4, with accident damage.

In shrubbery at rear of works: 20, 14, 7.

In scrapyard adjacent to Nahariyyah line: 1, 7, 21.

By Haifa East Diesel Depot: No. 22.

At Tel Hanan sidings (near Neshet): Nos. 12, 18, 8.

Tel Hanan headshunt: Nos. 1, 15.

"Old" Tel Aviv Mercas (Central) Station - this area now disused and disconnected from the formation to the new station): Nos. 3, 16.

At old (Turkish) station, Beer Sheva. 1 coach, grounded, painted two-tone blue but number painted over.

At Dimona station - one coach, grounded, with additional roof fitted - in use as hut.

It is believed one is grounded at a kibbutz in the North;  $\frac{1}{2}$  coach is also at the Liberty Bell Garden, Jerusalem. Where is the one used by the Likud party? When did the restaurant move? Is it true that some numbers were used twice? (It appears so from the above list).

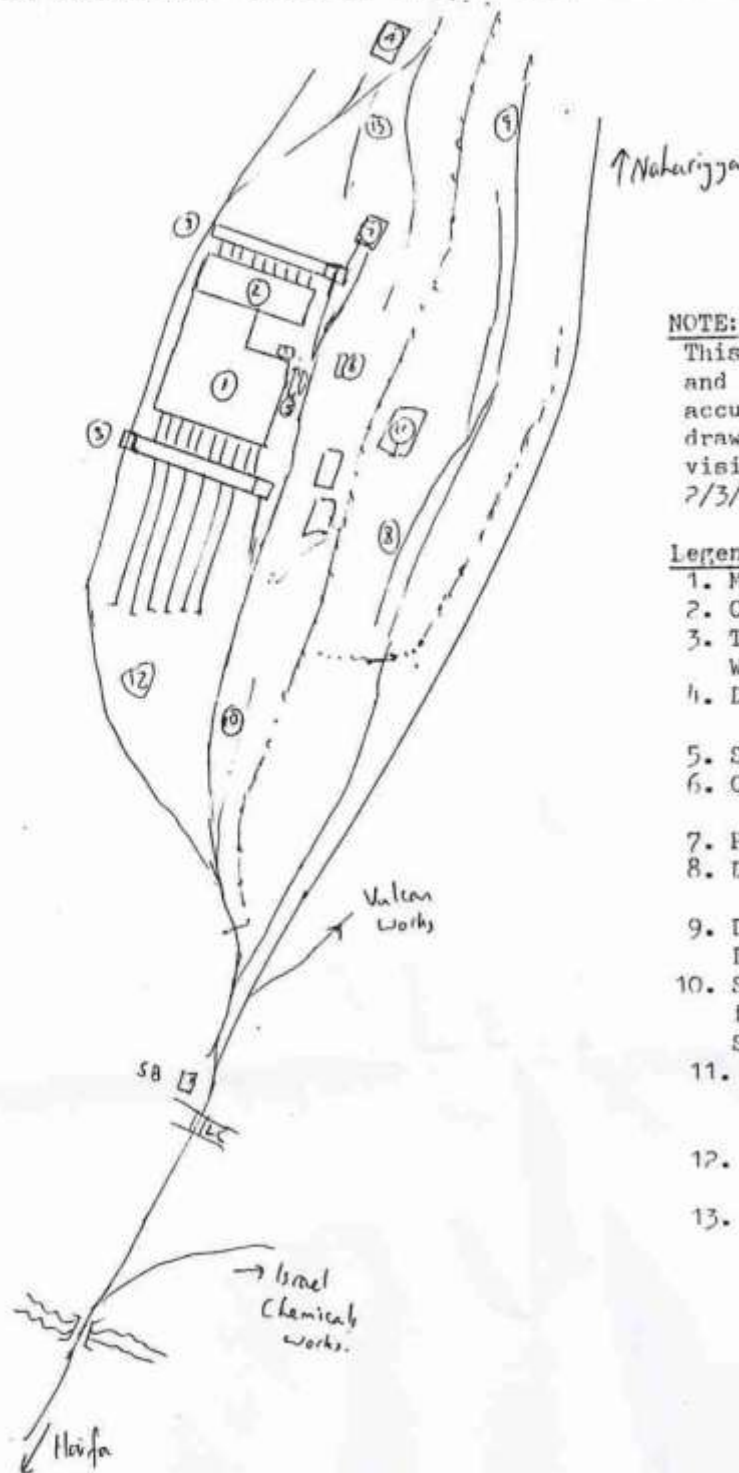
The letters "kuf bet" must somehow refer to a Trailer car. What does the "Nun" before No. 10 signify? And why only on this coach?

Several coaches - in use as hauled stock - were destroyed in the Bet Yehoshua smash of 26/12/63. Which ones?

P.S. No. 5. is preserved at Museum Hareke, Tel Aviv.

9. Qishon Works.

These are the main workshops for Israel Railways, situated a short distance North of Haifa on the Nahariyya line. Access is from the South end - a signal box controls the road crossing, spur connection from the Israel Chemicals branch, sidings to the Vulcan works (where many IR wagons have been built or rebuilt, though the line looked little-used now), spur to the "dump" or scrapyard, and to the works complex itself. This complex was "tidied up" around 1986, and now looks something like this:



NOTE:

This plan is not to scale, and the track plan is not accurate. The plan has been drawn from memory after a visit (with permission) on 7/3/89.

Legend:

1. Main workshops.
2. Carriage shops.
3. Traversers. (built Welland, Ontario).
4. Derelict foundry and pattern shop.
5. Several coach bodies.
6. Coach body used as synagogue.
7. Paintshop. (?)
8. Dump of derelict P-Way trollies etc.
9. Dump of two cranes, old Esslingen coaches etc.
10. Site of dumped & derelict freight stock, including SR-type brake van.
11. Workshop converting grain wagons to bogie flats.
12. Site of tracks removed 1986.
13. "Wasteland" - site of misc. dumped stock.

Qishon. (cont.).

Items of especial note included:

At Southern end (Legend area 10):

Derelict Egyptian coach, US Caboose, remains of wagons 25 205 T, 25 247 T, 25 047 T, remains of loco 118 (largely destroyed in Bet Yehoshua smash 1963 !), several frames of former PR coaches, including 35 012 W, 35 015 W and 1802 W, this latter of Clayton build. The last surviving SR-type WD brake van (from the HRT line) was in undergrowth, No. 4879.

The coach bodies (Legend area 5) included:

- 004. (ISWR origin).
- 005. (unknown 6wheeler).
- 001. (Midland Railway origin).
- 002. (Clayton).
- 003. (Probably Metroplitan RCW).

All are painted grey, and grounded. These numbers are painted on as their structure, not vehicle identifications. The synagogue is numbered 010, and is a Hedjaz Rly. saloon - reputed to be that of King Abdullah !

There are two P-Class bogie locomotive tenders - those of locos. Nos. 60 and 62. They are loaded with concrete blocks, and are used apparently as dead loads for bridge-testing. No 60's was on the set of tracks leading from the South traverser; no. 62's was in the scrubland (area 13) together with derailed Esslingen shunter no. 218, the frames and cab of bo-bo no. 105 (the other loco involved in the Bet Yehoshua smash), Esslingen railcar coaches 20, 14, 7, 4 (accident-damaged), and other odds-and-ends.

Near the workshop (Legend no. 11) was a US caboose half-hidden in shrubbery - 20T No. 4893, WD No. 9893 of 1942, 4wh. "Karon Bilom".  
קרון בילום

In the dump/scrapyard (Area 8) was a line of Matisa and Kershaw tampers, liners etc., and trolley no. 50, also a line of Esslingen O-6-OD's, derelict, nos. 223, 220, 224, 222, 216. Slightly further North (area 9) were Esslingen coaches 1, 7, 21, wagon 1139, shunter 215 and two steam cranes - all derelict. One: built Cowans Sheldon in 1950, no. C-30-1, apparently captured from the Egyptians; the other ex. WD No. 1, Cowans Sheldon 3855 of 1918.

Lying in the grass was a mobile Disinfestation Unit from World War

Also present - an ex-ESR wagon built Leeds Forge, 1905, and an ex-ESR 6wh. frame no. 15.0824.

A vast amount of stock was in the works or on the sidings to the South; the above merely scratches the surface. Deutz O-4-OD No. 201 was noted, along with two converted road-tractors, one superseded by the other, used as works shunters. The Pattern Shop was littered with miscellaneous wooden patterns - in good condition, but for how much longer? One needs a lot of time to explore this area properly.

Despite numerous alterations made over the years, there were still a few odd scraps of n.g. track or mixed-gauge track to be seen.

10. Habonim.

The unguarded level-crossing at km. 27, at Habonim, was the scene of an horrific accident in 1985 when a train hauled by No. 120, the 8am. express from Tel Aviv (Train 22) hit a bus-load of children on their way to the beach. A small monument has been created, on the West side of the line adjacent to the level crossing, consisting of a short length of track and a shrub for each life lost.

This is just North of the passing-loop at Dor.



## 11. Industrial locos at the Phosphate Works.

There are three main yards/works complexes delivering traffic to Israel Railways in the "Far South" - Tzefa, Oron and Har Zin. Tzefa in fact comprises three separate functions - for there is a phosphate works, the "Periklas" works (manganese ??) and a railhead for the conveyor belt which snakes across the countryside from the Dead Sea Works at Sdom.



Noted in March 1989:

- a). At Tzefa: A Vollert 8-wheel diesel loco. (Can this be called a D? A Do? It isn't an O-8-O - more like a box on castors). No. 84/80, built 1984, 80T weight, top speed 4.4km. with load, 8.7km. light, built at D7102 Weinsberg, West Germany. This has a cab (with a plate from which the above information was taken), but can be controlled from the ground through a radio-handset, in "robot" mode.
- b). Not strictly speaking a loco: The Periklas siding was worked by a Winch trolley, moved through cables laid between the rails, capable of pulling a rake of wagons through the loading-bay as required. This is marked ASEA, Made in France, Carriage Type POUSEUR 20T, Drawing No. NC11338, Manufacturing No. 717. Works No. 52-10-015.
- c). Har Zin. Another Vollert 8-wheel "thingummy", No. 84/50, built 1984.
- d). There had also been a cable-haulage system in use here, on two parallel tracks through the loading hopper. Wagons had been coupled to two "cable wagons", then drawn through as required. These wagons were still present, though disused and the cables being scattered all over the place. They were: USA 35T box vans, Nos. 6785 of 1942 and the frame of 35 105, with a rebuilt body. Also present: 4wh. 15T wagon frame No. 4772, built BRCW, Smethwick, 1935 for PR. This might have been used similarly, being parked also in the headshunt.
- e). At Oron: An unidentifiable General Electric centre-cab 0-4-0+ 0-4-0.

Well: That's it for now. A bit on preservation, a bit on history, a bit on signalling, a couple of curiosities, a track plan and a works visit. I've got plenty of notebooks on my own researches, and am willing to fill a few more pages with them - but how about you?

Shalom,



Locomotive at the time  
of the  
British Mandate period



First Locomotive  
in the Holy Land