

HaRakevet

Series 17
Issue No. 65 June 2004

הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
Edited and Published by Rabbi Walter Rothschild
Passauer Strasse 4, D - 10789 Berlin, Germany
Tel/Fax +49 30 2124 73889
e.mail: Rothschild-Berlin@t-online.de



War Department Light Railway 60cm gauge Hunslet 4-6-0T, Palestine Electric Corporation H7, has been rebuilt at Kibbutz En Shemer and fitted with new parts for those that had gone missing (including dummy boiler, chimney and steam dome). It has a diesel engine hidden in the boiler shell and now operates again over a short length of track with five small tip wagons at 'Old Geshet' in the Jordan Valley, near Naharayim where it worked in building the Rutenberg Hydro-Electric Power Station over seventy years ago. It is seen at 'Old Geshet' ready for the recommissioning ceremony on 11th May 2004. The banner in the background reads "The Naharayim loco comes home". (Photo: Paul Cotterell)

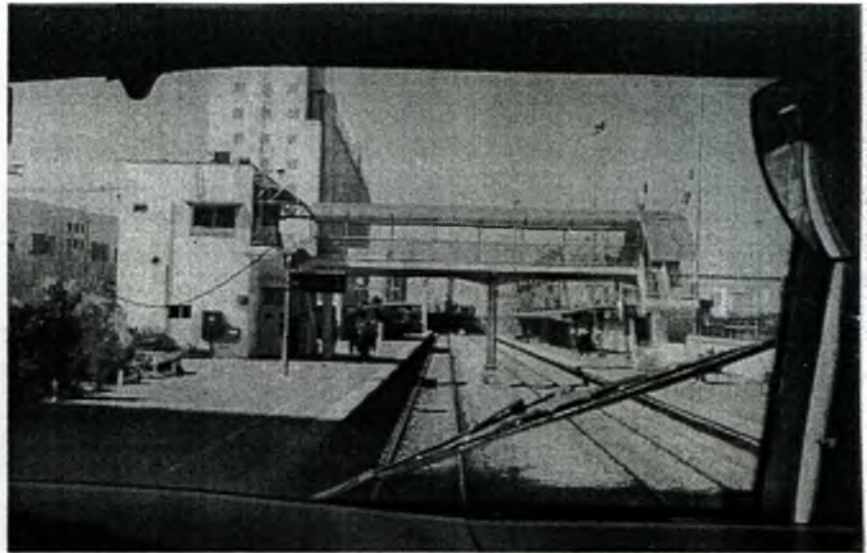
EDITORIAL

During our recent visit to Israel, discussions were held with several Harakevet readers. It is clear that there are varied and conflicting desires, hopes and demands for the magazine - some Israeli readers, for example, find the details of Tenders irrelevant or have already read the statistics and rolling stock news. There is no way a quarterly magazine can be up-to-date with the 'hot news'. This is what web sites are for, and examples are those of Pasim and www.israilnew.com. or Chen Melling's website: railnewsil.com. If one lives next to the line, much of the 'News' we publish is hardly News any more. So we would recommend and encourage that other enthusiasts produce a variety of outlets, websites, newsletters, whatever, to match specific needs.

In addition, one of the policies underlying my decision to set up what has become this magazine was to provide a means of publishing items of historical record - filling the gaps that Paul Cotterell had to leave in his book, providing a platform for new historical discoveries and for the preservation of memoirs and reports, so that these can be maintained in a variety of archives and libraries world-wide. That is hardly 'News'. And of course, what we can publish depends to a large extent on what we find for ourselves in our researches, or what we are sent; It has been wonderful having a friendly correspondent in Iraq for a few months, but this will presumably cease soon as political developments continue; we lack up-to-date information on Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt etc. as well, and are reduced to repeating and citing other published sources that are perhaps unavailable to our readers otherwise. So coverage will always be unbalanced and yet hopefully be as widespread as possible for a one-man operation run in his spare time on a totally non-commercial basis by one busy but enthusiastic person. (The technical term for this is 'Hobby', and the fun element should never be forgotten.....)

So it is clear that it will be impossible to please everyone, and we would rather admit this from the start.

One area where we could perhaps improve is Layout, especially by using modern technology (the Editor is somewhat of a technophobe) and we hope in future that some of our contributors will submit items in which lay-



out, scanned or digital photos and maps etc. are already digitally prepared, thus hopefully saving Steve Waldenberg a lot of work. Some such contributions will be used in this issue.

In Israel itself the progress on the Railways seems if anything to accelerate - electrification schemes, a 'proper' new General Manager, a new freight branch, more expansion plans, and more....

Enjoy!

The Editor.

STOP PRESS: As we put this issue together on 7th. June came a fax from Aharon Gazit in Israel - the Minister of Transport, Liebermann, had resigned on the 6th, as a result of strong political disagreements with Prime Minister Sharon.

65:4.

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). JANUARY 2004 STATISTICS.

From a press release of 09.02.2004 by Israel Railways Ltd.: - During January 2004, 1.81M passengers were carried by the railways, 9.6% more than in January 2003. Yossi Mor, the Acting General-Manager, said that "the figures for January, as well as the constant rise in passenger traffic, meet the target for 2004, in which the forecast is for 23M. passengers." He added that "during 2004 the new line to Ben-Gurion Airport and the upgraded line to Jerusalem will be opened. In addition a new timetable will be introduced at the beginning of June 2004 in which 288 daily trains will be operated, compared with 260 operated currently. The

65:3. A last look at the footbridge at Haifa Central which dated from the opening of the station in 1937. Seen from the cab of Bo-Bo 734 entering with a train for Tel Aviv on 8/3/04. The footbridge had already been roped off and replaced by a subway. Next day the canopy and handrails were removed, with the bridge being lifted out by crane at the end of the same week.

Note also the new platform canopies which have been erected to provide shade.

new timetable will also include improvements to services on the Tel Aviv - Beer Sheva, Tel Aviv - Haifa, Tel Aviv - Ashdod and Tel Aviv - Rishon LeZion lines; the year will also see the arrival of five more Alstom Bo-Bo locomotives (to be numbered 762 to 766) and nine further four-car double-deck train sets from Bombardier at Görlitz, to be numbered 416 to 424." [416 and some locos have already arrived - see below]

The distribution of traffic per route is:

Tel Aviv - Haifa line:
416,000.

Tel Aviv - Ashdod line:
284,000.

Tel Aviv - Beer Sheva:
240,000.

Tel Aviv - Kfar Sava line:
125,000.

(b). FEBRUARY 2004. STATISTICS.

From an Israel Railways Ltd. Press Release of 03.03.2004.

During Feb. 2004 the railways carried 1.78M passengers; this is 18.56% more than in Feb. 2003. The General Manager, Yossi Mor, said that "the constant rise in passenger traffic proves that rail has become a fast and convenient transport mode, and added

that "the railways continue to develop infrastructure and passenger services; these include the new station at Herzliya (8km. north of Tel Aviv), which is now nearing completion and should be open for service near Passover." The rise on traffic per lines was:

Tel Aviv - Nahariyya line:
231,000 = plus 15%.

Haifa - Nahariyya line:
148,000, = plus 14%.

Tel Aviv - Haifa line: 403,000
and Tel Aviv - Ashdod line:
281,000.

Regarding the lines Tel Aviv - Rishon LeZion and Tel Aviv - Beit Shemesh, a later Press Release of 16.03.04 noted that the February 2004 statistics for these lines, opened in September 2003, were now 45,200 and 38,600 respectively. Travelling times are 20 minutes and 35 minutes respectively. Liebermann said that "Since these two lines began operating there is a clear tendency of rising usage, thus proving the high potential of rail travel not only for these but for other new lines yet to be opened; the two lines have revolutionised the map of public transport in their areas, by creating the fastest and most convenient link to Tel Aviv; in June 2004, after the arrival of new rolling-stock, the service frequencies on the Rishon LeZion line will be increased for one to two per hour in each direction; from December 2004, when the upgraded section between Beit Shemesh and Jerusalem is due to be opened, there will be 15 trains daily in each direction between Tel Aviv and Beit Shemesh."

However, our correspondent notes that in reality there have been complaints about high fares (some 50% higher than the bus fares in places!), and bad connections and timings which can cause a passenger to waste 45 minutes. The opening of further sections of the North-South toll-road 'Road No. 6', which in places runs parallel to the railway and which by-passes the bottlenecks of Tel Aviv, and the number of people driving company cars with fixed annual contract payments for the toll road, does not make the railways' life any easier. It might be necessary to adjust fares and timings further if demand is to be increased.

(c). APRIL STATISTICS.

From a press release of 12.05.2004 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

1.5 million passengers were carried by the railways in April 2004, 12%

more than in April 2003; From the beginning of 2004, 7 million have been carried, 14% more than in the same period of 2003. The General Manager-in-Chief Mr. Yossi Mor, said: "The constant rise in passenger traffic, is the best evidence to the railways' success as a fast and comfortable mode of transport. The railways continue the policy of developing infrastructures and services for the passengers, and it includes three new 4-car double-deck trains which entered service during April 2004; within the next two months, a further six such trains, as well as five diesel-electric main line locos will enter service. In addition, we're working on the implementation of the railways' Directorate plan to purchase rolling stock and motive power for 2005-2006 at around \$260 million."

The rise in passenger traffic per lines was as following:

- Haifa - Nahariya line:
122,000. +10%.

- Tel Aviv - Nahariya line:
211,000. +7%.

- Tel Aviv - Haifa line:
343,000. + 1%.

- Tel Aviv - Ashdod line:
226,000. + 3%.

- Tel Aviv - Rosh HaAyin - Kfar-Sava line: 107,000. + 45% !

- Tel Aviv - Beer Sheva line:
217,000. +8%.

- Ramla - Beit Shemesh line:
36,000.

- Tel Aviv - Rishon-LeZion line:
40,000.

These figures, while impressive, give rise to the thought that maybe the rise on passenger traffic has levelled out or that there is even a decline on some lines, partly due to the fares being higher - on some lines like the one to Beer-Sheva - than those of competing buses by up to 50%!

The railways' spokesman, Mr. Benny Naor, explained that since the comparison of traffic refers to the same month in 2003, no such figures can be made for the new lines Ramla - Beit Shemesh and Tel-Aviv - Rishon-Le-Zion, which opened only on 26.09.2003; He added that despite the strong competition from buses, and the hourly-only services due to single track sections, the traffic there is stable!

(d). NEW GENERAL MANAGER.

From a Press Release of 24.05.2004. "Today the Directorate of Israel Railways unanimously approved the appointment of Mr. Yossi Mor as the new General Manager of the Railways."

Final approval will come after the Ravivi Committee has, as is usual in such cases, considered the nomination.

Mr. Mor has grown up within the system - something which is very usual in terms of modern appointments. He began as a shunter, then signalman, then worked on the tracks, and has worked his way up through his own efforts. From Dec. 2003 he had been acting as General Manager, and prior to that he had been Manager of first Northern and then Southern Divisions, and for six years the Head of the Infrastructure Dept. He is known as a warm and friendly person, who at the same time demands discipline - particularly from himself. During his last six months, as Acting General Manager, he succeeded in improving punctuality significantly, signed agreements with the Government and started a programme of improving passenger services. The main task which he may now face is the spending of \$1.52 Billion on development works! We wish him every success.

(e). LAND ISSUES.

In March 2004 there was some disputation over the formal recognition of the new Greek Orthodox Patriarch. As one report put it (IRAC 08.03.2004): "The largest landowner in Jerusalem after the Israel Lands Administration (ILA), the Greek Orthodox Church owns thousands of dunams in the capital, including the property on which the Great Synagogue is built; the Patriarchate's compound in the Old City, which includes 23 churches and monasteries; the Valley of the Cross; large sections of the Mount of Olives; the San Simon complex in Katamon; the land around the Jerusalem Railway Station; the new neighborhood of Har Homa; and large swathes of land in Talbiyeh and Rehavia, much of which was let on 99-year leasehold agreements to both private owners and to the ILA during the 1950s.

...With an estimated 200,000 Arabs belonging to the Greek Orthodox community and living within the church's domain, Israel has always been wary of the Greek Orthodox Church coming under the rule of a pro-Palestinian patriarch, fearing it could result in disputes over land when long-term leases expired."

From this it is not clear whether the station area itself is still leased, or was bought outright by the then Chemin de Fer du Jaffa à Jerusalem.

(f). PURIM.

This is the Jewish 'carnival' festival. I.R. was planning on this festival

(falling this year on Sunday March 7th.) to provide special 'experiences' for the passengers - to include games, balloons, competitions, shows, jokes, cakes, make-up specialists etc. These 'attractions' were be put on at Binyamina station on 4th. March, Beer Sheva on 5th. March, 7th. March at Tel Aviv Hashalom and 8th. March Tel Aviv Savidor. The Deputy Marketing Manager, Avi Hefetz, said that "these activities express the railways' good will and desire to be an integral part of society."

(g). PESACH.

During Passover the Railways were again making special entertainment activities for families at the stations of Nahariyya, Haifa, Binyamina, Tel Aviv Savidor and Tel Aviv Hashalom. Chocolate coins and balloons were given to children, and amusements were organised. Train services were to be accelerated during Pesach.

(h). SUMMER TIMETABLE.

Due to the introduction of Summer Time on the night of 07.04.2004, several changes to the timetable were to be made: Starting on Saturday night 10.04.04, all Saturday train departures were be two hours later; on Fridays an additional train on the Nahariyya - Lod and Lod - Haifa routes. (i.e. because the sunset is delayed, the Sabbath timings will be moved a bit.)

(i). JERUSALEM LINE.

On 16.02.2004 Avigdor Liebermann, the Minister of Transport, announced that during March 2004 the tender for the first section of the fast Tel Aviv - Jerusalem line (also known as Option A1) was to be published. This refers to the section between Kfar Daniel and Latrun Interchange (Road No. 1), and comprises a double-track line of 7 km., including four bridges totalling 1.5 km., as well as road underbridges totalling some dozens of metres. The total cost is almost \$18M and completion is expected to take around two years.

Kfar Daniel is the point from which Route A1 deviates from the line to Modi'in. The section between Ben Gurion Airport and Modi'in is now seeing accelerated construction after some administrative problems had been resolved, and opening is expected for the beginning of 2006.

As already reported, Mr Liebermann had recently instructed the

Railways to accelerate the construction of various segments of Route A1 so that completion could be achieved in 2009. Furthermore, the Ministry's spokesman, Mr. Avner Ovadya, told the press that "tenders for the remaining sections of A1, which include tunnels of a total length of over 17 km. and bridges totalling 5 km., are to be published within the coming months."

But see next item!

(j). BRIDGE PROBLEM.

The Court has ordered the railways to demolish a bridge on the line to Ben-Gurion airport, due to a deviation from the planned height, which thus causes a blockage to a nearby settlement; it has cost \$2.22 million to build!! It is not known as yet how much delay this may cause to the opening of the line to the airport or even to Modi'in!

(k). TRACKWORKS.

During Friday 20.02.04 the section Lev Hamifratz - Nahariyya was closed for traffic due to infrastructure works, and consequently all trains destined for or from Nahariyya, Akko, Kiryat Motzkin Kiryat Haim and Hutzot HaMifratz started or terminated at Lev HaMifratz. Traffic resumed on Saturday night 21.02.04. During the closure alternative services were provided by Egged buses.

Due to works in connection with the connection for traffic of the line to Ben Gurion Airport, and the double-track section from Pleshet Junc. to Ashdod, the sections Tel Aviv HaHaganah - Lod and Yavne - Ashdod Ad Halom were closed to traffic on Friday 28.05.04 and Saturday night 29.05.04. A special timetable operated for the Beesheva line, with passengers from Nahariyya, Haifa and Beersheva changing at Tel Aviv University (i.e. the trains presumably travelling via Rosh HaAyin and Bnei Berak!)

(l). DIMONA REOPENING PROPOSAL.

From a press release of 18.02.04. Avigdor Liebermann announced that "From January 2005 the citizens of Dimona, located 36km. south of Beersheva, will enjoy journey times of only 100 minutes to Tel Aviv." He said this during a visit to a works site on the Beer Sheva - Dimona line, which is currently being upgraded. An important element is the realignment of several sections, totalling 3km.; this will eliminate the speed restrictions of down to

50 km/h., due to sharp curves built in the 1960's due to budgetary restrictions, and although the upgrading is mainly meant to change the line from freight-only to mixed-traffic, freight services will also benefit from the improvements. The cost of the project is \$40M, which includes a new station to be built at the entrance to Dimona. Liebermann added: "The Railways' investments in rail projects at Israel's southern area exceed \$667M."

The existing station at Dimona is not being reopened and track has been lifted from the platform. The new station is nearer Beer Sheva.

(m). 2004 INVESTMENT PLANS.

Liebermann announced also that his Ministry will invest more than \$778M in 2004, compared with \$289M in 2003, and added that the massive investments in the railways are vital, and that "the shorter journey times from the south of Israel to its centre will once and for all put an end to the stigma of the remote and neglected area in the under-developed South."

In 2004 new stations to be opened include Ben Gurion Airport, Malkha at Jerusalem (on the upgraded old line), and Ramat Hovav, the Hazardous Materials Terminal south of Beer Sheva. [see below].

However, the newly-appointed Budgets Manager at the Finance Ministry, Mr. Kobi Haber, has decided (in May) to register the entire huge New Deal investments of \$4.4 Billion as a Cost rather than as an Investment, as decided by his predecessor Udi Yogev. He explained that it will cause only a minor 0.3% addition to the annual planned government deficit of 4%; originally, \$2.41Bn. were supposed to be registered as Investments in the stock exchange markets.

(n). DOUBLING TO BEER SHEVA.

During April 2004 IR will start doubling the Lod - Beer Sheva line at a cost of \$222M. Completion is expected during 2007, and one result will be to cut journey times from Tel Aviv to Beersheva from today's 80 minutes to around 45 minutes - due partly to increased flexibility, since there will be less need to wait at loops, and partly to some selective realignments to ease curves.

(o). NEW STATION FOR BEER SHEVA.

The old 1956-built station at

Beer Sheva, known as "North" since the extension to the town centre was built on 29.06.2002, is to be rebuilt on a new location several hundred metres to the north and closer to the University, where 17,000 students study. The university and station will be linked by a pedestrian suspension bridge. The project, to cost \$13.33M, will be carried out thanks to an agreement between the University's Directorate, the Ministry of Transport and Israel Railways.

It should be noted that it was students who originally formed the impulse for reopening passenger services on this line, initially from an earth platform at approximately the same location as the new station will be built. The existing passenger station, which had been semi-disused for some time, has also been refurbished but still has only one platform, on a loop off the freight lines.

(p). LINE TO RAMAT HOVAV OPENED.

The new railway line to the Hazardous Materials Terminal at Ramat Hovav, near Beer Sheva, opened to traffic from 1st. June 2004. According to a press release of the previous day this would finally allow demolition of the former terminal at Beer Sheva North station, thus avoiding any dangers of such materials being transhipped near residential neighbourhoods. Beer Sheva is expanding more rapidly than any other Israeli city, due partly to the availability of areas of land to the east of the city; this means that the present North station, originally built in the 1950's in the remote outskirts, is now surrounded by prestigious neighbourhoods, many of whose residents now use the railway services.

The new line to the terminal takes off from a junction on the new section of line from Beer Sheva North to Central, close to the latter. It is 12.5 km. long, and the line includes 30 culverts and six bridges, and cost \$28M, including the terminal itself. This has an area of 30,000 sq. m. and the planned loading/unloading system will operate according to highest safety standards.

Initial services will comprise two container trains in each direction per day; this may be increased according to demand.

(q). NEW LINE ASHKELON - BEER SHEVA.

By the first half of 2008 a new line between Ashkelon and Beer Sheva,

passing through Ofakim, Shderot and Netivot, in the south-west of Israel, should be completed, and will enable Tel Aviv to be reached from Ashkelon in 41 minutes, from Ofakim in 70 minutes, from Netivot in 63 minutes and from Shderot in 55 minutes.

(r). EILAT LINE.

The subject of the line to Eilat on the Red Sea is being currently mentioned almost daily; it appears that Prime Minister Sharon intends to discuss this topic with President Bush during one of their meetings. The motive behind the idea now is "an economic impetus for the area development, in partnership with Jordan." The staff of the Prime Minister's Office, together with the Ministry of Finance and the Municipality of Eilat are preparing a display and a business plan.

The intention is to create a land bridge between Asia, the Far East and Europe, as a real alternative to the slow, size-restricted and expensive passage through the Suez Canal. It should be mentioned that for some years all the successive governments tried not to raise this subject in order not to upset the very fragile relations with Egypt. Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not seem too worried about this and supports the plan; however, the Prime Minister's Office is worried lest, once the project becomes actual, Egypt might substantially reduce the passage fees through the Suez Canal so drastically that the whole thing becomes uneconomical. This subject would also be discussed with President Bush.

Mr. Gidi Frishtieg, a lawyer who is promoting the project on behalf of the Eilat Municipality, adds: "The line to Eilat has been discussed for more than 25 years (actually more than forty years!); we are speaking about only 180 km. (depending upon the points used for measurement), so what is the big deal?" He added that Eilat will be reached from Tel Aviv in only four hours. Of course, the line is being planned primarily for freight.

A Press Release from the Ministries of Transport and Finance and in the names of Transport Minister Liebermann and Finance Minister Netanyahu on 24.05.2004, waxed unusually lyrical for such a formal document, and is also worth quoting:

"The line to Eilat on the Red Sea will soon become a reality! If you have decided to take a vacation at Eilat and to bathe in the sea, all you will have to do is to board the train at Tel Aviv and be there in two hours! Does this seem a fantasy? Well, it will be true in five

years from today!"

Naturally many are sceptical - the Editor wonders about this sudden proposed two-hour journey time! - but it does appear that with this formal statement by two such senior Government figures some actual progress is at last under way. The first stage - detailed design, lasting about a year - should begin immediately, with the second stage, actual construction, to take a further four years. The project is costed at \$680M, thus becoming one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the entire history of Israel.

Netanyahu gave the following additional statement: "This is a blue-and-white project [i.e. a national one, matching the national flag], and totally independent. We will connect Ashdod and Beer Sheva with Eilat and connect them with the centre of the country; we will create a land bridge, which will have a tremendous effect on the South, and particularly on the currently almost idle port at Eilat; we intend to make this line highly competitive to the Suez Canal. If our neighbours from Jordan want to join us - they are welcome!" The intention is to begin operations for freight only, and later add facilities for passengers as well. A recent survey revealed that 5 Million people travel to Eilat each year by car, bus and plane; a brief street survey by radio reporters found that many would be interested in a rail service.

There are of course researchers who warn that the new line will not be cost-effective due to transshipment by rail taking longer than the passage of the Suez Canal, and those who worry that relations with Egypt will become strained, but Liebermann's response has been that the project is vital for Israel both socially and economically and thus cannot be measured purely in financial terms [!!], its benefits will be seen in the long-term only; and Netanyahu has stated that Egypt has no special reasons to seek a deterioration in relations, and that Israel has the right to implement its own projects independently anyway.

(s). CHINESE INTEREST.

Further to earlier reports about possible Chinese government interest in involvement in Israeli rail projects, [see under Light Transit News, below], the President and Chairman of China Rail Construction Company (C.E.C.C.), General (Retd.) Ding Chang Yang has recently visited Israel, and while meeting with Finance Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu challenged him to allow construction of the line to Eilat! Gen. Yang told Mr. Netanyahu that his company was responsible for building the US coast to coast line in 1864, at a rate of 18km. per 24 hours. [Is this true? I know Chinese labourers worked on the UP and SP lines, but surely not as employees of a Chinese company at that period? Ed.] Netanyahu's response was "If so, can I expect you to complete the missing 180km. within ten days?"

(t). NEW HERZLIYYA STATION.

From a press release of 30.03.2004, by the Transport Ministry.

The Minister of Transport inaugurated the new station at Herzliyya on Saturday evening 03.04.2004. This had been built at a cost of \$6.67M. He said: "The modern station located not far from the Sira (boat) interchange and adjacent to the Seven Stars Road (the main east-west road connection in Herzliyya) will enable a direct and convenient access from Tel Aviv to the business centre of Herzliyya." The new station includes a 450 sq. m. circular air-conditioned passenger hall, two platforms linked to the building by a 100m. long pedestrian subway which also passes under the Ayalon highway (the new station being in the median); an additional subway links the two platforms and the tunnels; this has lifts for the disabled. The main access ways to the station also have lanes for bicycles. The station also has parking spaces for 200 cars, as well as special bays for buses and taxis. An additional parking area for a further 300 cars will soon be built on the west side of the station. Near the station are Herzliyya's main urban activity centres - the "7 Stars Mall", sport centre, various public buildings, and an urban park is soon to be created.

The 7 Stars Road, passing near the station, will soon be rebuilt as a cut-and-cover tunnel passing under Road 2 (the coastline highway), which will be used by both road vehicles and the futuristic LRV Tel Aviv Metro/LRV line which will reach Herzliyya.

Paul Cotterell comments: "The new Herzliyya station opened on schedule in the evening of Saturday 3/4/04. It is slightly to the north of the old station, adjacent to what used to be the main road level crossing. The new station building is separated from the platforms by an extension of the parallel Netivei Ayalon highway, and passenger access to/from trains is by subway. With a multi-lane expressway running

through the middle of it, the new Herzliyya station may well prove to be the noisiest yet on IR when road traffic eventually begins using the highway extension."

(u). ACCIDENT COMPENSATION.

A passenger who was standing in a railway carriage from Nahariyya to Haifa and smoking, fell suddenly out of a train and was injured. He was rescued by the driver of a train in the opposite direction on the adjacent track. This all occurred some 8 years ago, and he appealed to Court for compensation. The Railways were prepared to pay about \$36,000, claiming that he didn't really deserve even this since the doors cannot be opened while the train is moving, so either he was trying to commit suicide, or he was deliberately being pushed out in some criminal manner. The court however accepted his lawyers' claim that the man is normal and that he fell out due to a technical failure of the door, or just because it had not properly closed. The court instructed the railways to pay an additional \$144,000 as a compromise settlement.

(v). ELECTRIFICATION PLANS AND TENDER.

In April 2004 one of the biggest tenders ever published in the Israeli general market was to be published - that for the electrification of the Railways.

The first stage will cost \$356M - this sum being part of the \$5.3 Billion 5-Year Investment Plan. It should be completed by 2008 and will cover 300km. of main lines (out of a total of some 700km.), between Nahariya, Ashkelon, Lod and the new ("A1") line to Jerusalem.

One of the companies intending to participate in the tender is the Israel firm Epkon (formerly Feuchtwanger) a well-established concern specialising in electrical systems and control systems. The company plans a partnership with two Czech companies, 'E.Z. Praha' and 'Praha Sudop'.

In January, Siemens Israel organised a seminar in participation with senior members of the mother company. In February, the KGM Group also held a seminar in co-operation with the Austrian Embassy - this comprised Alcatel, ARE, Bombardier, Enzesfeld Caro-Metallwerke AG, Geoconsult ZT

GmbH, Plasser & Theurer GmbH, RTCA, SPL, SSL, TDV, VAE GmbH.

On 10.03.04 the Lesico Engineering Co., the local representatives of Balfour Beatty, held its seminar. From Israel Railways came Ing. Andre Gressaru, the Electrification Project Manager.

On 31.05.2005 another press release: Transport Minister Liebermann forwarded on this day to the National Infrastructure Committee a request to declare the railways' electrification programme a 'Project of National Importance'. The railways have now completed the master plan for electrifying the network within the framework of a 5-Year Plan. Phase 1 will cost \$351M. [i.e. 5M less than noted above - but don't believe such figures! Ed.]. Liebermann said that "approving the request by the Committee headed by Prime Minister Sharon will shorten significantly the statutory procedures required for the project, and will give a push to build the 23 substations along the lines." Further advantages of electrification will include: a saving of \$66M annually in energy and maintenance, as well as a reduction of air pollution, and increases in speed, acceleration and deceleration, thus increasing capacity for trains in urban areas. Israel Railways is still entirely diesel powered, unlike many railways worldwide which are electrified, so there will need to be a gradual replacement of the older equipment and an upgrading of the system. The electrification will cost between \$350,000 to \$400,000 per km. The programme will be carried out by the Israeli management company Tedom, to be assisted by DE-Consult of Germany.

The Minister's announcement did not pass without responses. He was asked if he had not heard about huge railway networks in the USA, Canada and Australia, and other countries where the scope of electrification is still minimal. Others wondered whether he had heard of the British 'Inter City 125' achieving 200km/h (and more), whereas the current highest speed on IR is 150km/h on a few sections, with the railways planning for only 160km/h in the future. Yet other questions concerned the new diesel engines by MTU and GE which have a 40% lower pollution rate. He was also asked why, if electrification was planned, new diesel locomotives were still being purchased from Alstom of Spain, rather than being leased, or second-hand engines acquired? However, the most important factor at present will be the Minister's

political position, since he has poor relations with Sharon who has clearly warned that he would not hesitate to fire any Cabinet member who disagreed with him! In which case, the new General Manager would need to carry the burden.

A "Request for Information" was published in June 2004. The 'Project' is described as the electrification of approx. 300km. of double track!

(w). BANK OF ISRAEL REPORT.

The Research Dept. of the Bank of Israel has published its annual report, according to which "the railways in Israel are much less utilized than most European networks; the network relative to the country's area is less than half the average in Europe, while passenger/km is even lower." However, the Bank's conclusions are that "due to the massive investments of the past 10 years, and the even greater investments in the coming five years, the picture will change significantly."

(x). 'NEW DEAL' - MAJOR EXPANSION PLANS.

Just one day after publishing the Railways' purchasing programme for rolling stock and motive power through a press release (see below), on 4th. May 2004 the Finance Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu and the Transport Minister Mr. Liebermann signed a 'New Deal' 5-year planned budget of \$5.34 Billion. This was broadcast on all main media channels, and both emphasized the importance of investments in infrastructures, especially in railways. They repeated the statement that the aim is to link every town and city with 50,000-plus inhabitants to the rail network. This view has received some criticism from some people who suggest it would be better to concentrate on main lines between the main cities, where a heavy passenger traffic is to be expected, rather than spreading the network out in a less-controlled way!

Later on the same day, the Ministry of Transport issued its own press release:

"The railway line between Tel Aviv and Rishon LeZion West will be opened during 2007". This came after the publication the previous day of the tender for building the station at Rishon LeZion West / Moshe Dayan (see below). The following details have been given by Mr. Liebermann: The line is to be 16km. of double track, between Tel

Aviv HaHaganah and Rishon West; cost will be \$436M. The line will divert from the main line to Lod near Tel Aviv South, will run southwards and then be integrated into the median of the Ayalon South highway; it will pass through the cities of Holon and Bat Yam; there will be four intermediate stations built at Holon Interchange, Wolfson (both in Holon), and Josephtal and Komemiyut, both in Bat Yam. [These are names of roads, as is common with naming Israeli stations. Ed.]

The new station at Rishon LeZion West will have four tracks, 800 sq. m. of air-conditioned passenger concourse, elevators/escalators intended also for the disabled, and Park & Ride facilities for 800 cars. It will take only 13 minutes to reach HaHaganah station; frequency of service will be five trains per hour each direction at peak periods.

An important feature of this station is that it will be a junction. From here a direct link will eventually be built to Ashdod, putting an end to the roundabout journey via Lod, while the other line will continue to the second new station to be built in the city - Rishon LeZion Central, to be located near the Central Bus Station of Egged; from here, Tel Aviv will be reached in 16 minutes with a frequency of three trains an hour each direction. Each of these will be much better than the current situation at HaRishonim (Roses Garden), the other station, which currently has a service of one train per hour taking 22 minutes to Tel Aviv via Beer Yaakov and Lod. Nevertheless, the fact that this city will have three stations is indicative of its size and importance - 200,000 inhabitants, and fourth in size after Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa, and one of the few still to have some reserve land for expansion.

In the first half of 2007 the section between Hahaganah station at Tel Aviv and Moshe Dayan station at Rishon LeZion should open, with the rest of the line by the end of that year. Mr. Liebermann added that three additional Tenders would be issued within the next two weeks for infrastructure works on the line. Preparatory works are indeed already being carried out.

(y). SOLDIERS' DAY. From a press release of 10.05.04 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

About 10,000 people used the special "bonus" which the railways gave the reserves soldiers and their companions, within which, they could travel free on all lines on Sunday, 09.05.04, which has been declared as "a saluting day

for these soldiers and their families as a respect to their patriotism". The Chairman of the Railways' Directorate, who is also the Chairman of the Public Committee for the saluting day to the reserves soldiers, Mr. Moshe Leon, was behind this initiative.

He emphasized the fact that the railways were among the first to introduce the idea, and added, that, from now on it will become a tradition for the coming years. It should be mentioned that in a country like Israel, where military incidents and clashes are a daily "business", such an initiative can make the railways popular. However, throughout the year, soldiers have already been an integral part of the railways' "landscape" for years!

(z). HEAVY POWER ON THE GRAIN TRAIN.

Ex-'Egyptian Jumbo' 161 was noted on 30/5/04 working at least one of the morning Dagon trips from Haifa Merkaz. This is the first time one of these Co-Cos has been seen on this humble work. Apparently there was a temporary shortage of suitable locos, and G12 125 had already taken over the afternoon Dagon trips.

On the other hand, G16 161 was again seen working the Dagon grain silo trip on the morning of 2/6/04. Perhaps that loco shortage is not quite so temporary after all.

(a2). RAILWAY EMPLOYEES' RIGHTS.

Thanks to a financial agreement signed recently - May 2004 - between the General Manager of the Ports Authority, Mr. Amos Ron, and Mr. Yossi Mor, the 1500 employees of the Railways have secured all their social rights, including those inherited from the Ports Authority before the railways were privatized. They will receive a lump sum. This still has to be formally approved by the Ports Authority Council and the Israel Railways Ltd. Directorate. However, one issue not yet solved is the Authority's claim for return of investments in the railways, in excess of 0.88M. This will probably be delayed until completion of the Authority's structural reforms.

(b2). SOLDIERS' TICKETS.

See 64:4:(i). In June an Economics Committee of the Knesset approved a suggestion whereby soldiers may continue to travel free of charge by rail -

against the Ministry of Defence's plans to cease this practice- The new compromise will enable free travel until the end of 2005. In addition, Policemen, Border Police and Prisons Staff will enjoy increased fare reductions. The scheme will cost \$26.4M annually, to be shared equally between the Ministries of Defence, Finance and Transport.

65:5.

ROLLING STOCK NOTES.

MORE DOUBLE-DECKERS

From Evyatar Reiter: As predicted in Harakevet 64, two new sets of double-deckers were unloaded at Ashdod Port on 7-8/4/04 from the good ship 'Svenja'. Individual coach numbers are 420, 421, 478, 479, 480, 481, 484, 488. They were hauled away from the port to Lod by Bo-Bo 741. (Note: three more sets are due early June.)

(Incidentally, Evyatar has built up a vast data base on all aspects of IR rolling stock past and present.)

MORE LOCOS.

New Bo-Bos 762 and 763 were unloaded at Ashdod port on 31/5/04. Also aboard the same ship was 746 returned from repair following accident damage.

MORE IC3's?

In April 2004 rumours were circulating that IR might purchase ten more IC3 units, second-hand from Sweden. The production line has been stopped so this would - if it comes to fruition - be a sensible and economical way of adding to IR's stock.

At the time of going to press these rumours had not been confirmed; on the other hand, the Editor has been sent a copy of a detailed (18-page) Engineering Assessment on works that would be required to convert such units (including units Nos. 1376-78, 1385-6) from Swedish/Danish standards to Israeli ones. These include removal of a children's play module, change of carpets, removal of 1st.-Class seats and partitions, different ceiling panels, removal of Danish/Swedish ATC equipment and installation of Indusi, etc.

NEW ORDERS? [See 64:4:(j).]

From an IR Press Release of 03.05.2004. The Directorate adopted yesterday, after a series of discussions, the recommendations of the international consultants "The Louis Berger Group UK", for Phase 1 of equipping the railways with motive power and rolling stock during 2005 and 2006, at a cost of \$261M.

The purchasing programme will include a further 54 double-deck coaches, including power cars/driving trailers - (a continuation of the present contract with Bombardier at Görlitz); 113 single-deck push-pull coaches (including power cars/driving trailers), partially second-hand; and six diesel-electric locos (possibly Alstom Prima - a continuation of the present deliveries; however, owing to the serious plans for eventual electrification, which may lead to a surplus of diesel locos, it may also be considered worth purchasing some diesel locos second-hand for a more limited period of service). However, a later version of the release cast doubt on this possibility.

The equipment, to be delivered from the beginning of 2005, would provide an immediate and urgent answer to the shortage of motive power and rolling stock caused by the rise in passenger traffic and the opening of new lines and stations. Upon completion of deliveries, it will be possible at last to scrap the

**HaRakevet is printed
in England by
CPS-Airedale who
specialise in short
run magazine work.
Leeds 0113 226 7497**

HaRakevet@cpsairedale.co.uk



remaining fleet of ageing coaches, some of them now 49 years old (albeit refurbished).

As has already been reported, upon creation of the new Israel Railways Ltd., the directors froze the purchasing programme until it had been checked by international consultants. The consultants therefore checked the existing and planned operational programme, the forecast rise in passenger services, and the development programmes, according to which Phase 1 of the 5-year programme should soon be implemented. In a few months the consultants will publish their final recommendations regarding the equipment that will still need to be purchased, for completion of the development plan's next phase in 2008.

Due to approval of Phase 1, tenders will soon be published."

[Editor's Comment: This seems a typical example of paying someone to tell you what you already know, and has merely led to some further delays in procurement. IR is now substantially operated with one type of loco, one type of 'express' push/pull coach, one type of 'suburban' double-deck coach and the IC3 units which are used on both suburban and longer-distance traffic. Any fool could have seen that opening new lines to Rishonim, Kfar Saba, Beit Shemesh etc. would require, quite simply, more of the same, to simplify staff training and maintenance procedures! And some of the older coaches are now falling apart with rust, albeit the interiors are still in good condition.]

TENDERS.

(i). MC/RS/02/04. An annual framework agreement for manufacture and supply of Brake Shoes and Pads for rolling stock and an option for an extension of an additional 48 months. Bids by 17.03.2004.

(ii). BN/KB/02/04. Drainage Systems for Waste Diesel Fuel at the railways' refuelling points at Lod, Ashdod, and Dimona. Works include: delivery and installation of collection systems for wasted diesel fuel at the various refuelling sites, underground pipe works, and water/oil separators. Time for implementation at each site: 5 months. Last date for bids: 17.03.2004.

(iii). BN/KB/03/04. Construction of infrastructure for a Wheel Lathe at Qishon Works, including electricity and arm crane. Works include: concrete works, locksmith works, arm crane, hydraulic systems, electric supply, preparatory and earthworks, etc. Time for implementation: 4 months. Bids by 09.03.2004.

(iv). BN/KB/05/04. Upgrading of control and Inspection Channels at Qishon Works. Works include: Dismantling of concrete floors and channels, building two concrete channels, and concrete flooring, electric supply and supply of dividing boards, delivery and installation of compressed air supply lines, earthworks etc. Time for implementation: 4 months, Bids by 09.03.2004.

(v). HN/KB/06/04. Upgrading Tel Aviv Savidor (Central) Station. Works include: Dismantling and destruction works, Casting concrete, sealing, carpentry and locksmith work, sanitary installations, electricity, plastering, paving and covering, painting, aluminium works, elevators and escalators, sign boards, etc. Structure 01: Temporary preparations; 02: Rebuilding the toilets; 03: upgrading the station buildings; 04: Rebuilding the entrance and pedestrian bridges; 05: replacing fire-fighting system and platforms and existing buildings. 06: replacing transparent roof over pedestrian bridge.

(This will be the third major change at least that this station has undergone since opening in November 1954.)

(vi). HN/KB/07/04. Infrastructure works for upgrading and double-tracking the Naan - Beer Sheva line. Section D, between km. 42.800 and km. 58.500. To consist of: Structure 01. Infrastructure works; Structures 02-06. Various railway bridges; Structures 07-09. Various railway culverts. Structures 10-15. Security buildings. Structure 11. Option: laying monobloc concrete sleepers type B70 at the finished alignment.

Time for implementation: 21 months. Bids by 28.04.2004.

(vii). HN/KB/10/04. Building a railway bridge over the Naaman River (south of Akko.)

Works include: Structure 01: the

bridge itself; Structure 02: an option for developing the site. No fixed time for implementation, but bids by 29.03.2004.

(viii). HN/KB/11/04. Upgrading works on Haifa - Kiryat Motzkin section, km. 4.580 to km. 9.390. Works include: excavation and removal of ballast and soil, laying roadbeds and new ballast, level crossings, and communications works. Time for implementation: 4.5 months. Bids by 03.05.2004.

(ix). HN/KB/12/04. Building the fast link to Jerusalem (A1 Route) - section No. 1, Anabe to Latrun. No time for implementation as yet, but bids by 11.05.004.

(x). TK/KB/03/04. Laying main communications cables on the Lod - Naan section (of the Tel Aviv - Beer Sheva line.)

Works include: Supply of various kinds of cables, uncovering, opening and closing existing and new concrete channelling, to be constructed within context of other projects; laying of main cables - copper and optical - into the concrete channels, supply of cable assemblies and installation of connections, installation and connection of pedestals; supply and installation of end and corona blocks, and final checks on cable relays. Time for implementation: 4 months, bids by 14.04.2004.

(xi). BN/KB/11/04. Construction of a Refuelling System at Lod depot. To include: Earthworks, preparation of the area for installation of a fuel tank, metal construction and sheet metal works for construction of a fuel pump house and an unloading point, building a container and small tanks, installation of a portable building, electricity and pipeline works. Time for implementation: 6 months, Bids by 19.05.2004.

(xii). Building the Passenger Railway Station at Rishon Le Zion West. (Moshe Dayan).

The station includes the following structures:

Structure 01. Tracks from km. 105.75 to km. 106.75; Structure 02: Concrete structures; Structure 03: Foundation works up to platform level; Structure 04: Station building over the platforms, and completion of new platforms. No time for implementation designated as yet, but bids by 24.05.2004.

(xiii). HN/KB/14/04. Construction of line Ben Gurion Airport - Modi'in: Installation of infrastructure and completion work of infrastructures. To include: Low-voltage electrical supplies, control building, sanitary, water, sewage, ventilation, building and finishing works. Time for implementation: 12 months. Bids by 03.06.2004.

(xiv). HN/KB/17/04. Completion of infrastructure works on the line to Ben-Gurion airport.

Works include:

Structure 01: Completion of infrastructure for 2nd. track to the airport; Structure 02: Re-aligning road No. 1 to its original alignment. Structure 03: Maintenance of road No. 1. Structure 04: Option- completion of safety works. Time of implementation: 4 months. Latest bidding date: 03.06.2004.

(xv). HN/KB/18/04. Laying a third track on the Ayalon railway between Tel Aviv HaHaganah and Tel Aviv South stations. 3rd. Tender. To include: 01: Infrastructure and concrete works in this section; 02: control building; 03: extension of the western platform at HaHaganah station; 04: Bases and pillars for the pedestrian bridge; 05 & 06: New niche buildings south of the station. Implementation within four months, Bids by 22.06.2004.

(xvi). HN/KB/19/04. Upgrading tracks and drainage systems at Haifa East station and Marshalling Yard area. Time of implementation: 8 months. Latest bidding date: 14.06.2004.

Note: the drainage systems upgrading works are of high importance due to the fact that the area is flooded every winter.

(xvii). HN/KB/21/04. Infrastructure works for tracks and platforms at Wolfson Interchange (Holon Station) on the line Tel Aviv - Rishon LeZion West, now under construction. To include: 01: Infrastructure for tracks; 02: Platforms; Implementation within 12 months, Bids by 17.06.2004.

(xviii). MC/KB/01/04. Design, Supply and Installation of a 5-ton overhead crane - including beams and travelling rails - at the Efrayim (Kishon) Works at Haifa. Time for implementation: 3 months; there is an option for an additional installation of any similar type, within 24 months from the date of work starting. Bids by 19.05.2004.

(xix). MS/RC/2004/1. Provision of on-train Buffet Services by Food Trolleys. To include: selling foods, drinks, and evening newspapers. The contract is for 12 months, with optional extensions of 48 months. Bids by 11.05.2004.

(xx). MS/RC/2004/3. Provision of a kosher Food and Drinks Trolley (excluding cigarettes) as well as foldable chairs and tables at Rosh HaAyin North railway station area. Contract is for 12 months with optional extension of additional 12 months. Bids by 19.05.2004.

(xxi). BN/KB/09/04. Building the Yoseftahl passenger station at Bat-Yam on the Tel-Aviv-Rishon-Le-Zion West line.

Works include: Structure 01: Infrastructure works for tracks, and concrete buildings. Structure 02: Frame works up to platforms surfaces-phase 1. Structure 03: Station building above platform level & completion of the platforms-phase 2.

Time of implementation: 10 months. Latest bidding date: 27.05.2004.

(xxii). BN/KB/10/04. Building a store

at Kishon works, Haifa.

Works include: Earthworks, casting cement, building, sealing, carpentry and locksmith works, sanitary, electricity, paving and wall covering, painting, stone works, air conditioning, industrialized elements, sprinklers system, low voltage systems, roads and other developments works.

Time of implementation: 6 months; bids by: 08.06.2004.

(xxiii). BN/KB/12/04. Replacing the tiled roof at the Passenger Dept. building at Haifa East station. To include: Dismantling, framing, carpentry, shielding, etc. Implementation within 1 month, bids by 23.06.04.

(xxiv). BN/KB/14/04. Upgrading and Extension of IC3 depot at Haifa East. To include: very low voltage systems, systems for supply of oil & compressed air, water and air drainage systems, as well as fire-fighting systems. Time for implementation: 12 months, bids by 24.06.2004.

(xxv). BN/KB/15/04. Construction of the Biblical Zoo station at Jerusalem. To include: Earthworks, piling, cast concrete, pre-cast concrete, sealing, carpentry, steel frameworks, plastering, paving and covering water pipelines, electrical and communication systems, low voltage and public communications systems.

Time for implementation: 4 months; bids by 27.06.2004.

[Aharon Gazit adds: This station will replace a rather spartan halt built more than ten years ago and closed six years ago when traffic on the line temporarily ceased due to five derailments within a single year. This station was my idea and, surprisingly, was at the time implemented within two months from the suggestion being made! It was an immediate success - everything is, of course, relative - and according to reports from that period, many of the line's users disembarked here rather than at the main Jerusalem station!] [Ed. adds. This halt served the southwestern suburbs of Jerusalem, as also will the massive new Malha terminal, and Aharon's comment may explain the current reluctance to reopen the line fully to the 'real' station.]

(xxvi). BN/KB/13/04. Building the Beer-Sheva University station.

Works include: Structure 01: Station building; Structure 02: Generator building; Structure 03: External electricity supply; Structure 04: Access road; Structure 05: Terminal; Structure 06: Track infrastructure; Structure 07: Communications; Structure 08: Platforms and an underground pedestrian passage.

Time of implementation: 10 months. Latest bidding date: 09.06.2004.

(xxvii). HN/KB/15/04. Landscape rebuilding works on the Lod - Rehovot section.

Works include: Completion of development works, gardening and irrigation, earthworks, concrete, drainage, and landscape rebuilding along the alignment.

Time of implementation: 6 months.

Latest bidding date: 31.05.2004.

(xxviii). BN/MT/15/04. Measuring services on the alignment of the fast link to Jerusalem-A1.

The frame agreement will cover the time from signing up to completion of measurements.

Latest bidding date: 31.05.2004.

(xxvix). Several related Tenders: No. MS/RC/06/2004; providing Coffee Trolley service at Beit Yehoshua Station, 07/2004 at Herzliya Station, MS/RC/09/2004, providing a coffee trolley service at Binyamina Station. MS/RC/10/2004 - ditto for Beer Sheva North. Contracts for Binyamina and Beer Sheva North, 26 months, for Herzliya and Beit Yehoshua, 12 months with optional additional extension of further 24 months. Bids by 0.06.2004.

(xxx). MC/SR/08/04. Framework agreement for providing translation and publishing services of technical, legal, commercial and general literature from English, Spanish, German and French to Hebrew and vice versa. The contract is for 12 months; the railways reserve themselves the right to extend it to additional 36 months. Bids by 17.06.2004.

(xxxi). MC/RC/01/04. For Manufacture and Supply of several sets of 8 16-ton Screw Lifting Jacks, over a three-year period. Bids by 20.07.2004.

(xxxii). RC/RS/03/04. Annual framework agreement for supply of printed materials, with an optional extension of up to additional 48 months. Bids by 23.06.2004.

65:7.

MODELLING NOTE.

Chen Melling advises:

The Czech company of MBmodely (based in Prague) is offering H0 scale models of Cairo trams of type K5AR (made by Tatra in real-life). The catalogue numbers are 17902 for red/beige version and 17901 for the green/grey version.

Pictures of the models and purchase details can be viewed at this address - http://www.mujobchod.atlas.cz/shop/category.aspx?id_shop=5148id_language=198ts=96rh9548id_cat=44

The company's contact details are: MBmodely, Ing. Barnett Miroslav, Belcická 8/2823, 141 00 Praha. Tel: +420 603 276837; Fax: +420 272761432; E-mail: mb_modely@volny.cz

65:8.

LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT NEWS.

(A). JERUSALEM.

(i). From a press release from the Ministry of Transport, 10.03.2004. The construction works for the first LRV line

in Jerusalem gained notable momentum in this week; City Pass, the concessionaire for this BOT project, was allowed an additional delay in starting, as well as a further financial guarantee from the banks. This occurred one day after the State had signed an agreement with the concessionaire for the works definitely to start on 30.06.2004.

It should be mentioned that this is the third time-extension that the group has received. The project was stuck for a while due to the banks' refusal to give credit, owing to their fear that the line might prove unprofitable due to low usage from passengers, as a result of fears of terrorism. However, City Pass made a commitment to start detailed design of all components of the scheme, including tracks and stations, electric supply, trains, and ticketing. The detailed design may last ten months, but the works can already start, as mentioned, in June 2004. The banks providing the support are Leumi and Hapoalim, two of the biggest in Israel.

City Pass, let us recall, comprises Alstom Transport, CGEA and the Israeli companies Ashtrom, Elco and Poalim Investments.-

Meanwhile the Manager of Jerusalem's Transportation Master Plan, Dr. Moshe Hirsh, has announced his resignation, to take effect from 30.06.04 (i.e. when works must start!) - after leading the project for the past ten years.

A model of the controversial LRV suspension bridge, to be built at the Western entrance to the city, has been displayed for a whole month at the Town Hall for the public to see and comment.

(ii). Jaffa Road Preparations Complete.

From a press release of 30.03.2004:

As a gesture, in response to a request by Jerusalem's mayor Mr. Uri Lupolianski, the main preparatory works for the first LRV line, as well as the upgrading of infrastructure, in Jaffa Road has been completed. He had requested that it be done before Passover; the works involved rebuilding parts of the roads and the sidewalks/pavements (here we have a difference between American and English!). Thousands of visitors and tourists were expected during the holidays, and the city's businesses and citizens would also benefit from the works being finally over.

Lupolianski had said "It is important that over Passover the city's heart should return to its Shop Window in a well-prepared and well-organised condition, so as to welcome the many guests."

The works of moving infrastructures, has lasted two years, and cost dozens of millions of dollars. The result has been an enormous increase in the capacities of water, sewage, electricity, communication and TV cables, so as to make them suitable for the expected growth in apartments, businesses and services by 2020, more than ten years after the first line should start operating through Jaffa Road which, as a result, will become a pedestrian zone, between Zahal Square (near the Old City wall) and the Machaneh Yehuda market.

The Municipality's General Manager, and Charman of the LRV project managements, Mr. Eitan Meir, has praised the tight cooperation and coordination between the project management, Moria and Eden companies, (who carried out the works) and the infrastructure companies - the Israel Electrical Company, Bezeq (Israeli Telecom), HaGichon (sewage) and the cables company, enabling these works to be carried out more efficiently, and with the greatest consideration to the public. He added that "the key for the works' success was the explanatory works and activities within the community". The project's Manager, Mr. Shmuel Tzabari, added that "the massive infrastructure upgrading has been enabled by the municipality's policy, which means that, after laying the LRV line along Jaffa Road, no heavy infrastructure works will be permitted there for 15 years; this decision encouraged all the various companies to combine their works with the LRV preparatory works."

It should be mentioned that there is already a tremendous improvement in water supply and sewage drainage; amongst other factors, the typical bad smell which was one of the identifying symbols of the street, and which was caused by 'pirate' sewage connections over the years, has entirely disappeared. Mr. Meir added that "the infrastructure works have brought both the public and private sectors trust from those who, for a while, did not believe in the city's revival; the determined position of the municipality signalled to us all that the promised breakthrough is close."

Now, with completion of the preparatory works on Jaffa Road, complimentary works involving new bus lanes - relocating those which will in the future no longer use this road - will start immediately after the Pesach holidays. Amongst others, Agrippas St. (near Machaneh Yehuda, and currently one-way) will become bi-directional; other public bus routes from Hebron Road, through the city centre, will approach the city via Keren Hayesod, King George and Strauss. This lane will be operated by buses with capacity of 250 passenegrs. The first LRV line will, together with the new bus lanes, create the core of a new mass transit system for Jerusalem. Preparation of the lanes will also take time but maximum attention is being given to the minimization of disruption to citizens and businesses. In order to enable the city centre to recover from the two years of disruption, and to avoid wasted time between system building and the start of operations, it has been decided that works will start at both ends of the line, at Pisgat Zeev in the north and Mount Herzl in the south, and advance towards the final stage at the city centre. Mr. Tzabari summarised: "Thanks to a lot of patience from the city's citizens and businessmen, we are implementing a plan that will make the centre attractive economically, culturally and aesthetically, like the most beautiful cities in the world."

(iii). A press release sent by Aharon Gazit on 10th. May paints a different picture:-

In his annual report, the State Controller Judge (retired) Eliezer Goldberg, has strongly criticized the project. The main severe points in his report are:

The investments in the project have been 55% higher than in the initial estimates, due to bad follow-up and control of the project by the Transport Ministry. The public sector's investments grew from \$109 million planned to \$271 million- 147% more. The State's investment in the project's design and management components will reach \$32 million in 2005, compared with the \$4.3 million planned - i.e. 7 times more!

Both the Transport Ministry and the Jerusalem Municipality had decided on the LRV option even before a feasibility study for the city's Transportation Master Plan had been prepared; also the tender for choosing the winning concessionaire was published before the final feasibility study was made. The Transport Ministry did not do anything to receive the first chapters of the feasibility study, and therefore could not control the project properly, thus the high share of the state in the infrastructure works, beyond that planned.

B. TEL AVIV.

The Israeli and international businessman Mr. Lev Levayev, through the Africa-Israel company which he owns, is negotiating with the Chinese consortium CCECC for partnership in building the Tel Aviv Metro/LRV system. This is one of the three largest consortia of its kind in China; a high-level delegation was expected to come to Israel in the first week of May, and will meet with Mr. Levayev and with Mr. Pini Cohen, the General Manager of Africa-Israel.

As already reported, Africa-Israel belongs to the MTS (Metro Transportation Solutions) group, to which Siemens of Germany, Econ of Canada, HTM; of the Netherlands and the Egged Bus Co. of Israel also belong, and is one of four competing groups involved in bidding for this project.

It was announced in May that the Israeli engineering company Granite Ha-Carmel, which was so far a member of the group consisting of Daewoo Transport, Ansaldo-Breda, and others, has announced its withdrawal from the project; the Greek infrastructure company Terna, which is building the Athens LRV project, will succeed the Israeli company.

65:9.

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. TURKEY.

(i). PRESERVED COACHES.

A two-part article on preserved railway coaches in Turkey has appeared in 'Continental Railway Journal', Nos. 136 and 137.

(ii). GERMAN-TURKISH CO-OPERATION.

From "Today's Railways" No. 101 p. 49: "As part of an official visit by German Chancellor Schroeder in February 2004, DB and TCDD announced a new strategic relationship. DB will assist TCDD in the planned reform of the Turkish railway industry - it is clear that the model will be the system now in place in Germany. DB will assist TCDD with training and consultancy staff, in particular looking at engineering, rolling stock and business organisation. DB sees this co-operation as an important step in developing partnerships in Asia."

and, from the same source:

"At the same time.... German diesel loco builder Vossloh announced the formation of a new subsidiary based in Istanbul - bizarrely with the English name 'Vossloh Rail Technologies Ltd.'! Vossloh's existing sales to TCDD consist of track components, in particular points.

Vossloh intends to offer Public Private Partnerships (in English again) solutions to TCDD and the Turkish Government. Projects already under discussion are sections of the proposed high speed route between Ankara and Istanbul and extensions to the existing tram and metro systems in major cities".

(iii). BOSPHORUS TUNNEL PROGRESS.

In "Lok Magazin" 6/2004 p. 32 is a note by Thomas Meyer-Eppler:- "The Turkish Ministry of Transport is currently in negotiation with a Turkish-Japanese consortium formed of Tasei, Kumagai Gumi, Gama and Nuro, concerning details for the construction of the tunnel. These firms, won the tendering competition, in which two other consortia took part.

The project involves a double-track tunnel, with 11.5km. of bored tunnel sections on the eastern and western banks, and in the middle, in the Straits, a 1.8 submerged tube. The Pre-financing of the project, which will cost \$US 2.5 Billion is being arranged, amongst others, through the Japan Bank for International Co-operation."

(iv). TRAMWAY AT ESKISEHIR.

From 'Today's Railways' 102, p. 14. "By autumn 2004 the city of Eskisehir, to the west of Ankara, will boast a new metre gauge 750V DC tramway network. 18 Cityrunner trams are being built by Bombardier at Wien. Vehicle 001 ran more than 100 km. on tests on the Oberrheinische Eisenbahn Gesellschaft

interurban route between Mannheim and Heidelberg between early December 2003 and the end of February 2004."

(v). NEW RAIL PROJECTS.

From 'Today's Railways' 102, p. 47. The Turkish Ministry of Transport has announced plans to invest \$US 15 billion in two major railway projects. The first is the construction of a new 600km. railway running east-west from Polatli through Afyon to Izmir, serving iron ore mines at Divirgi. The other is reconstruction of the line from Ankara to Sivas, where cutoffs will reduce length by 128 km.

(vi). MORE BOSNIAN LOCOS ON HIRE.

From the same source - ZFBH (Bosnia- Herzegovina State Railways) has sent (Swedish Rc3 type) electric locos 441 408 and 441 520 to Koncar at Zagreb, where they are to be overhauled, regearred to 160km/h. and then rented to TCDD.

B. ERITREA.

As already noted, this is technically (geographically) in North-East Africa but owing to earlier references and wartime experiences, we report from time to time on railways here as well. An extensive illustrated article in "Continental Railway Journal" No. 137, Spring 2004, p. 132ff. includes:

"During Nov. 2003 two railfan groups paid six-day visits to Eritrea, the LCGB from 5th. to 10th., followed by Enthusiast Holidays a week later....

What is undoubtedly the most remarkable steam revival so far in the 21st. century originates from this little-known country in north-east Africa, bordering the Red Sea. Following a long and debilitating war with its neighbour Ethiopia, Eritrea gained independence in 1991. The new government set up a Railway Rehabilitation Project, with the intention of reopening the 950mm gauge railway between the Red Sea port of Massawa and the inland capital Asmara, 118 km. away and situated on a high plateau at 2342 metres above sea level. Work started in 1997 on the coastal section, and by December 2000 the line was serviceable as far as Ghinda, 69km. from Massawa and the principal town en route. By 2002 the top 13 km. from Asmara down to Arbaroba, featuring tunnels, viaducts and reverse curves, was open and used by enthusiast charters in November of that year. The most difficult mountain section from Ghinda to Embatkalla (81km.), Nafasit (93 km.) and Arbaroba

(105km.) was not completed until 2003, whereafter through running became possible. Between Nafasit and the summit of the railway at km. 115, there are no less than twenty tunnels and the line climbs 723 metres in 22km. Due to the uneasy peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia the army had not been demobilised and soldiers were used on reconstruction work, aided by two Russian-built lorries converted to rail and capable of hauling two wagons of ballast or other materials. Thus the railway has been reinstated at minimal cost.

In November 2003 the railway was open throughout but there were no regular scheduled passenger or freight trains, the only source of revenue apparently being chartered trains for visiting railway enthusiasts and small foreign specialised tour groups. The commuter service which ran over the causeway at Massawa in 1997 lasted only a few months, and is probably the only normal commercial operation so far. The 'Enthusiast Holidays' group spent six days travelling over this most spectacular railway, using examples of all the types of motive power available, namely three Mallet 0-4-4-0T's, a 0-4-0T, and Fiat railcar No. 2, known as a 'Littorina'. This railcar, however, was feeling its age, and only ran for a few kilometres out of Asmara. Everyone connected with the railway, and indeed the ordinary local people, proved most co-operative, and nothing seemed too much trouble for them to make visitors welcome."

The following locos and stock were recorded on 12th. & 13th. Nov. 2003 though one is warned that some apparently carry incorrect builder's plates:-

Asmara Shed:	
0-4-0T 202.002.	B r e d a
2169/1927. Serviceable.	
0-4-0T 202.004.	B r e d a
2272/1929. Serviceable.	
0-4-0T 202.009.	B r e d a
2455/1937. Out of use.	
0-4-0T 202.011	B r e d a
2457/1937. Out of use.	
0-4-4-0T 440.008.	Ansaldo
1162/1915. Cosmetically restored.	
0-4-4-0T 442.54.	Ansaldo
1364/1938. Working.	
0-4-4-0T 442.56.	Ansaldo
1366/1938. Under repair.	
0-4-4-0T 442.59.	Ansaldo
1369/1938. Working.	

Asmara Diesel Depot.
Bo-Bo. 25D Krupp /1957.
Under repair.

Bo-Bo. 27D Krupp /1957.
Under repair.
Railcar. 2 Fiat Littorina.
Working.
Railcar 7. Fiat Small Littorina.
Status not clear.
0-6-0D. Drewry 2075/1936.
Derelict.
0-6-0D Drewry 2079/1937.
Derelict.
0-4-0D Drewry 2083/1937.
Derelict.

Ghinda Shed.
0-4-0T 202.008. Breda 2454/
1937. Serviceable.
0-4-0T 202.010. Breda 2456/
1937. Working.
0-4-4-0T 442.55. Ansaldo
1365/1938. Working.

Mai Atal station.
0-4-0D. Brown Boveri 4067/
1935. Derelict.

C. HEDJAZ.

(i). AMMENDORF. The former carriage works at Ammendorf, just south of Halle (Saale), now a part of the Bombardier concern, is to be closed. This was finally decided on 30th. March 2004 by the Bombardier Board. Some of the coaches for the Hedjaz Railway came from here, a long, long time ago.

(ii). RECONSTRUCTION IN SYRIA. From John Alexander: In the February 2004 issue of the 'International Railway Journal' in the section headed 'World Market':

"The foundation stone has been laid for modernisation of Damascus station, representing the first stage of reconstruction of the section of the al-Hijaz Railway linking Syria to Saudi Arabia. Work on the station is being carried out by al-Salam Group, Saudi Arabia at a cost of \$US 70 million. The group, which is building a new commercial centre as part of the re-development project, has been awarded a 25-year contract to operate the station."

Has any reader heard of this or know anything of what subsequent stages are proposed?

He notes: "There seems to have been no further news on the proposal to reopen to reopen the line from Serghaya to Rayak. While this may have been technically possible, it always seemed politically unlikely."

John also sent the item about Kanowat to a friend of mine in Saudi, who commented:

"I am sure that it is not part of

an attempt to restore the Saudi section of the Hejaz Railway. There has been quite a lot in the Saudi press recently about railways. It now looks certain that they are going to go ahead with the new line between Riyadh and Jeddah, with a possible extension between Jeddah and Mecca. There is also a plan for a phosphates / bauxite line from Quriyat in the north-west of the country to Riyadh / Dammam. However, there has been no serious plan to restore the old Hejaz line (probably as with the air and road links now in place, it would not get high enough passenger numbers)."

D. SAUDI ARABIA.

From 'Arab News', described as 'the Middle East's Leading English Language Daily', for 01/04/2004:

ON THE TRAIN TO DAMMAM.
by Sameen Tahir-Khan: Special to Review.

"My exhilaration rose as I sat in the family section of the speeding train, on my way from Riyadh to Dammam. This was my first time traveling by rail in Saudi Arabia and the first time I ventured out on a journey alone. The 449 kilometer trip would put me at my destination in four and a half hours, stopping only twice at Abqaiq and Hofuf.

The seats were comfortable for the SR40 economy fare, although for another SR20 I could have had a better sofa seat and some carpet on the floor in first class. Either way, the view was the same, a monotonous streak of sand which blew around us as the train made its way east.

The view inside was more absorbing. There was an Indian man reading a VCR manual, but no box was in sight. "I'm a doctor working in Al-Ahsa. I never get time at home, so I'm reading my manual here," he told me. There were small Saudi boys playing with toy guns and running amok on the train, annoying those who were trying to sleep. An old woman kept mumbling something and calling out a name. "My mother is blind," a young Saudi man explained. "I have to assure her every few minutes that I am close by."

A vendor with tea, coffee and a variety of treats was doing his rounds. The children rushed over to buy chips and chocolates, later leaving their litter throughout the train. "Hello. My name is Muhammad," an elderly Saudi man on my right said. I had watched him read a notebook marked "cash book". I thought he was probably calculating his wealth, but as it turned out he was only increasing his English vocabulary. "I love English, and I have a list of new

words in my notebook."

Muhammad turned out to be a mine of information. He told me that he first took the Saudi train 40 years ago. "The trains back then were not as comfortable. They had wooden seats and no air-conditioning. You had to bring your own food and if you opened the windows you got covered in dust. They were also very slow. A train from Hofuf to Riyadh took almost seven hours, now it takes only two."

The existing Saudi Railway, which runs only between Dammam and Riyadh, was inaugurated in 1951 by King Abdul Aziz. The original railway line was 556 km long. In 1980's a high-speed direct line was constructed, cutting off over a hundred kilometers. Around 800,000 passengers ride the passenger trains annually, and the old line is still used to transport 850 million tons of cargo per annum. Most passengers find the railway services comfortable, affordable and convenient. "The train is a little slow compared to other modern trains around the world," said Junaid, an American computer analyst who rides the train from Riyadh to Dammam every month. "But the schedule is convenient." His wife, Shazia had only one complaint: the bathrooms. "They are dirty and I usually avoid them."

There has been growing public demand for the railways to extend its services to other cities, especially Jeddah, Makkah and Madinah. The Saudi Railways Organization is hard at work on plans for the expansion and has appointed financial and technical advisors. The plan includes an East-West land bridge connecting Dammam to Jeddah within the next few years and railway services linking Makkah via Jeddah and Madinah with Yanbu, called the Makkah-Madinah Railway Link. This 570 km line would help the millions of Umrah and Haj pilgrims each year.

In addition, cargo lines would run between the major industrial towns and those with valuable minerals; like the 115km Dammam-Jubail line and the 1,300 km North-South lines between Al-Jalamid (which has huge deposits of phosphate) and Al-Zubairaha (rich in bauxite deposits) to Jubail via Riyadh.

International container traffic for countries like Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait is also under consideration. As we drifted closer to our final destination, the Bangladeshi cleaner was working hard to clean the carriage. He makes SR300 a month yet puts in 12-hour days. I asked him if first class was easier to clean than economy. "There is no dif-

ference in the amount of dirt. Whichever class has more children, will have more litter," he said.

Railways are an integral part of the economy and public infrastructure for any country. Saudi Railways is already over fifty years old, but at last it looks set to be moving in the right direction. For more information you can visit the website at:

< www.saudirailexpansion.com >".

(Copyright:Arab News (c) 2003)

E. EGYPT.

The following appeared in an Internet journal of Middle East News ("AME Info") on 12th. Nov. 2003: (Thanks to Chen Melling for the tip): "Egypt's brightest new Advertising Idea":

"What's bright orange, 100 meters long and travels back and forth across Cairo a dozen times a day? It's the largest billboard advertisement the city has ever seen: a nine-car Metro train covered with the Tang drink logo.

Kraft Foods, which owns the Tang powdered drink brand, wanted a creative idea for the Egyptian market that was really different. 'Outdoor marketing has become cluttered. We were searching for a new medium for advertising,' says Noha El Daly, the marketing manager for Kraft Foods Egypt. The Metro line with the Tang advertisement travels on the main Marg-Helwan route, stopping at 35 stations.

Along with the billboard, Tang rolled out a new campaign, which it hopes will increase brand recognition among consumers. A radiant Middle Eastern woman holding a pitcher of Tang is the focus of its regional advertising. Translated from Arabic, the slogan reads, 'There's nothing like the heart of a mother.'

The impetus behind the venture, the first of its kind for the megacity's mass transit system, is a small, 11-year-old company called the Egyptian Marketing Company (Emco), which specializes in direct-to-consumer promotions for the food and beverage industry.

'Kraft was dormant in the Egyptian marketplace despite being number two in the food and beverage industry worldwide,' said Sami Khair, Emco's director of business and marketing development.

Kraft's business in Egypt is mainly in the powdered soft-drink segment, with sales of locally co-manufactured Tang making up the bulk of its revenue and commanding 66 percent of the local powdered beverage mar-

ket. (In April, Kraft Foods expanded its presence in Egypt with the acquisition of local biscuit and snack-food maker Family Nutrition.)

During a brainstorming session with Ramy Bermawy, brand manager at Kraft Foods Egypt, Khair and Nader Azab, Emco's president and CEO, came up with the idea of branding the Cairo Metro. 'It is more cost-efficient than a television ad in terms of reaching people,' says Bermawy. 'And it creates more word of mouth.'

The first train is a three-month pilot project to gauge public reaction. If all goes well, commuters may soon expect to see Metro trains shrouded with splashy advertisements for instant coffee, a Red Sea resort destination or the latest cell phones. This type of branded advertising is about two years old, says Khair, becoming more common worldwide as new methods are developed for printing, installing and removing the vinyl graphic.

The Cairo Metro is viewed as the city's most efficient mode of public transit, transporting 700 million commuters a year. It carries an average 2 million passengers daily. Fresh revenue may provide the funds to pay for extending the megacity's main commuter artery, and for the construction of a planned third line.

The focus on shoring up public transportation has gained greater significance as the woes of Egypt's deteriorating and under-maintained national railways were made plain in the aftermath of the worst train accident in the 150-year history of the national railways. On February 20, 2002, an inferno engulfed the third-class cars of an Upper Egypt-bound train packed with passengers returning home to spend the Eid holiday with family and friends. A state-investigative commission confirmed that the aging carriages of ill-fated Luxor-bound train were not equipped with fire alarms, fire extinguishers or emergency brakes.

With corporate sponsorship, the future of the railways looks more promising. Young and energetic, Kristina Attalla, assistant marketing director, carries out market research for Emco and, questionnaire in hand, asks commuters what their take is on the new Tang train. It's a hit with youth, she says, adding that bright colors positively affect some commuters' mood: 'It does attract your attention.'

'It's effective because there is so much cluttered billboard advertising in this country,' adds Khair. 'But you can't be risqué. Do you think I can put [Latin American pop diva] Shakira on the

Metro train? Never. I don't think that would be acceptable.'

But there are others ways of reaching commuters that should prove a lot less controversial. Dubbed the 'Nile Metro radio station,' another Emco marketing concept utilizing the Cairo Metro came to fruition in October, also as a pilot project. Nile Metro is a soft music station inside the cars that incorporates advertising and public service messages, including ones discouraging fare dodging and promoting riding etiquette. The station is part of the overall strategy of carving out a new medium for advertising, increasing the transportation ministry's revenue base, educating the user and improving the system, says Khair.

Marketing executives at Emco have even toyed with the idea of bringing climate-controlled comfort to sweltering summer days on the Metro through an ad barter arrangement with an air-conditioning manufacturer. 'There is only so much advertising money out there, and everyone is competing for it,' says Khair. 'It comes down to creativity and effectiveness.'

F. IRAQ. "AN ECHO OF SADDAM ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS":

From the 'Daily Telegraph' of 27th. March 2004. By Jack Fairweather. Despite the journalistic or maybe sub-editorial obsession with the term 'Orient Express' to include almost any train east of Belgrade, an interesting insight into current conditions on the railway border crossing. Thanks to John Baesch for the cutting.

"There are many things we complain about in Iraq, and by the time the Orient Express arrived at the Syrian border, the Iraqi passengers on board had exhausted most of them.

"Bombings, kidnappings, robbery, unemployment," summarised one weary businessman. "Who'd want to stay here?"

But the mood changed abruptly when Syrian border guards began to evict from the train those unable to afford a bribe.

Iraq may be plagued with violence, but a taste of life in Syria - the last Ba'athist stronghold and a place with more than a whiff of the



old Iraq - convinces most Iraqis that they are better off without the paranoia and corruption of a police state.

The symbolism of the scene at al-Rabia police station was clear. "It's just like travelling back in time to the old Iraq," muttered another businessman, Mohammed Ahmad, as the Syrians did their work. The guards stood next to a large poster of President Bashar Assad. On the Iraqi side of the border a similar picture of Saddam Hussein has been replaced by a political slogan. "It makes me realise how far other countries have got to come," said Mohammed.

Now, with Iraqis able to travel freely, they may well become the seeds of discontent. That at least is what the Americans are hoping, that their great project of democratising the Middle East is slowly putting down roots. Coalition officials in Baghdad are quite open about the idea. "We want to start exporting the ideas of freedom and democracy being worked out in Iraq to other Arab countries. Iraq will be a model for the Middle East," said an



official of the Coalition Provisional Authority.

At the start of the train ride, such a vision seemed a long way off for the businessmen and tourists boarding the Mosul - Aleppo express. A gun battle at a police post near Mosul station had brought armed officers on to the streets outside.

Hassan Youssef, a 30-year old businessman on his way to scout the Syrian timber market, said: "It is not necessary I go to Syria for my work, but the security situation has meant I'm desperate for a break."

The rail service that once extended the Orient Express from Istanbul to Baghdad has fallen on rough times since the war. The Iraq-Syria section of the journey was closed for months because of repeated bomb attacks on the track. Passengers are also warned that terrorists are using the Syrian border to infiltrate Iraq. "But don't worry. Terrorists don't usually travel by train," said Lidol, the Syrian guard.

The train was made up of four sleeper cars and an alluringly entitled 'dining car'. He showed us into one of the cramped but clean sleeping compartments. "Pure luxury". he said. The Baghdad - Aleppo link was first opened in 1940 following decades of colonial wrangling between France, England and Germany. It connected with the Orient Express to link London and Baghdad in a seven-day journey which Agatha Christie, a regular commuter, described as 'undoubtedly my favourite train' and used as the setting for her novel 'Murder on the Orient Express'. The train lost its name and antique rolling stock when the Ba'athists came to power but the nature of the journey remains the same. "I haven't travelled on this train for 50 years but it still retains its special flavour" said Sabin al-Hattaeb, a 71-year old businessman settling his not-inconsiderable bulk into one of the sleeping berths while his daughter, grandson and great-grandson set themselves up around him. "I didn't want any of them to miss this", he explained.

The train was soon making its way across the plains at a stately 30 mph. through a landscape lit by the setting sun. The passengers were ushered back to their cabins at the border crossing. On the Iraqi side, customs officials came to politely inquire if any passengers were carrying guns or bombs, or looted archaeological items. There was no welcome to Syria. At the border guards began ejecting people from the train. Those that had enough money were allowed back on. Others, including myself, were taken to a back room in the local police station, where dusty files were stacked to the ceiling.

The Syrian Ba'ath party may be less bloody than the one which tyrannised Iraq, but its means of control are no less petty-minded and intrusive. Hours of paperwork followed, in which the names of fathers and mothers and their occupations were scribbled down by officials. One guard, asked if he thought the tumultuous events across the border augured changes in Syria, replied, "We have noticed no change across the border. Everything is exactly the same as it has always been."

65:10.

THE EDITOR'S TRIP TO ISRAEL. SOME MUSINGS.

After visiting Israel for a conference in April 2004 and taking lots of photographs, visiting as many new and old stations as possible in the limited time available and meeting with several 'Harakevet' readers, the Editor likes to permit himself some musings on his observations - designed to record, but also to comment, criticise and stimulate response from those who may be in a position to add information or correct misunderstandings.

Here are some excerpts from the personal Diary. As usual on such trips, one tries to note everything, however trivial, on the basis that things change so quickly.... irritatingly, some carriage numbers are hard to read - those of the Double-Deck coaches particularly are hidden by platform edges.

(Abbreviations: ecs = Empty Coaching Stock; D/D = Double-Decker. LE = Light Engine. p/p= Push-Pull set. n.s. = non-stop.)

Monday 19th. April. (This was "Yom HaShoah", Holocaust Memorial Day.)
Visit with Paul Cotterell to Musuem. At Haifa Mizrach station, noted: 735 on 413/ 462/ 463. 742 on four ex-SNCF coaches and a generator: 637 plus 94/ 95/ 93/ 92.

At 07.25 a southbound train made an unscheduled (but clearly expected) stop at the remaining platform at Mizrach and quite a few passengers got off. Why is this station still officially closed?

At 07.42 'Yo-Yo' 261 headed containers into the Port.

07.43 the "Top'n'Tail" headed north, four coaches. (This is the suburban working operated with a G12 loco at each end. It is formed of Loco 124/ 610(half-generator)/ 635/ 78/ 115/ Loco 108.)

07.50 G12 111 on 10 grain wagons, the 'Dagon shunt', went south through Mizrach to the grain silos at Merkaz..

732 on ecs, 261 came out LE, a S-bound IC3. 732 detached and shunted off LE, at 08.00 three IC3's headed northbound.

Then a walk, past the museum to the Hiram bridge over the old level crossing (the crossing box still stands, apparently it was manned for a year after the crossing closed, the men had absolutely nothing to do!), the green old store sheds on the east side of the line will go soon.... watched the 'Top'n'Tail go past, this is a high spot for local enthusiasts. This will also soon be replaced by another IC3 unit. (There are rumours of plans to buy some more IC3 units second-hand from Sweden). T44 No. 131 was just visible shunting wagons in the yard, presumably for Train 315, the morning freight. Then through the gate and into the museum area itself, noted the repainted 163, and not-yet-repainted 107, wooden Van 1116 (which Paul says is actually not a museum object yet but a tool van), and the 25Resh ballast wagon now repainted in brown, also inside the 'Hillmen's Bunker'. Back to the office to be shown the archives, which are now beginning at last to take some real shape, lots of storage boxes and document rolls in cardboard tubes.

At the P-Way depot behind the Museum was bogie flat 1231 fitted with a trestle, 936, Little Giant crane no. 10.

At 08.27 744 was on a northbound p/p.

A rake of ecs in the sidings was formed 636/ 618/ 629/ 84/ 631/ 82/ 619/ 641(full generator) + 732. The old coaches are still in pretty good internal condition but display much rust and corrosion outside and, if they are to be retained much further, will require further 'shopping'.

08.40 111 on ten wagons for the Dagon shunt.

08.43. S-bound train with 760, a northbound formed of IC3's, and 261 shunting through - all at the same time.

739 on ecs. arr. 08.58 - 607/ 613/ 111/ 621/ 620/ 624/ 77/ 608/ 81/ 56 (full generator). SNCF set of coaches 92/ 93/ 95/ 94/ Generator.

Five IC3 units 05/ 04/ 12/ 40/ 20 went by at 08.12 on a Nahariyya-Beersheba train.

Then walked over to the sidings to get an e.c.s. train at 09.12 to Haifa Merkaz, past 50.012Tet and coach 314 parked by the port entrance. The ex-SNCF rake was at the Golani sidings by the port. (These comprise two loops and two stub sidings.) The Dagon shunt comprised 111 on 60.018/ 60.138/ 60.133/ ? / 60.051/ 60.122/ 60.121/ 66.017/ 60/012/ 66.002/ 60.005/ 60.508/ 66.024/ 60.058 at 09.22 in Plat. 3 at Haifa Merkaz, where the bridge of course has gone but I got some photos, before we parted and I took the 09.22 train to Nahariyya. (15.50 NIS single). The train comprised 731 on 329/ 336/ 328/ 340/ 326/ 338/ 304.

At the diesel depot noted 116, 117 and a Yo-Yo, coaches 325 and 74 in a rake of wagons, at the N. end of the Haifa yard 60.004 Daled and two red numberless 'Delek' ex-USATC tank wagons.

At Qishon saw 251 derelict and an Esslingen coach, the rake of ancient derelict stock as well (Paul wants to use the frame of the ex-LSWR coach in this rake, which is just a collection of firewood, and marry it to the better-preserved body of the former Qishon office coach.) Noted that the wooden former PR van is still on the two grain sidings, now disconnected, on the east side of the line north of Hutzot Hamifratz. At Kiryat Chaim a new underpass was being built, and at various points along the line new sound screens were being constructed on one or both sides, preventing the pedestrians from walking over the line but making decent photography in future also impossible. At Kiryat Motzkin we crossed the Top'n'Tail in the other platform at 09.40, and north of the station 122 was waiting to head south with grain wagons, standing on the top end of the second track. A Zoo has been built on the right near an old army depot, filled with rows of derelict half-tracks. The grain silos by the former steel works are in use, with some grain wagons standing there. At Akko we went into Plat. 2 and crossed IC3's 7024/ 31/ 27/ 22 heading south. There are still the remains of a former USATC brake van and what looks like a metal van with side lookouts grounded here next to the station.

Arrived at Nahariyya Plat. 1 just before 10, at 10.00 the siren went and everyone on the platform stood still for two minutes..... It was strange and symbolic to have JUST got off a train onto a 'ramp', but in such terribly different circumstances..... in a Jewish state on an Israeli train....

I got some photos of two trains in at once - the second platform has been built since I had last been here - and bought a ticket through to Beit Shemesh for 51 NIS., but had then missed the 10.08 and had an hour till the 11.08. (The 10.08 had partially comprised 303/ 332/ 320/ 335/ 327/ 324/ but I didn't get the rest of the coaches or the loco.) Back at the station got some photos, though the entrance from the road is now fenced off, with signs, since the bomb attack there a year or so ago. Also on Plat. 2 as the 11.00 arrival came in. Then to my 11.18, the same train back from Plat. 1. There is a short siding facing north just south of the point where the two platforms are. There is no longer a run-round loop, Plat. 1 is a stub and Plat. 2 is blocked off at the end by a gate, not a buffer, and the overgrown derelict line still proceeds over the road and northwards to Betzet.

The 11.00 arrival comprised 754 on 315/ 331/ 342/ 312/ 322/ 323/ 334/ 305. Locos are at the North end on these p/p trains.

At Haifa Mizrach noted the other ex-SNCF coaches 96, 97, 98 and another, plus 53, stood in the sidings at 11.40.

At Dagon, 11.45, stood grain hoppers 60.005, 66.002, 60.012, 66.007, 66.017, 60.121, 60.122 Tet. Four tracks have now been relaid and resurfaced within the silo complex. (This work was under way last year). At Hof Carmel 188.7002 set off northbound from Plat. 1 at 11.55. At Zikhron Yaakov it was clear the access road from the main road was being improved and resurfaced - maybe an indication for future re-opening. (Of course, thanks to Security needs it is no longer possible to open a small and simple Halt - there have to be ticket barriers, fences and at least one security guard and ticket seller present at all times. Staff costs would be prohibitive at somewhere like Bustan Hagalil....)

748 was on an Ashdod train waiting at Binyamina Plat. 3. At Hadera Maarav there were several loaded container wagons, whereas yesterday evening there hadn't been any. At Netanya bogie ballast hoppers 48.011 Resh and 48.012 Resh stood as yesterday. We shot through Herzliyya, at the now-replaced former station there is still one loop in use on the west side but the other, formerly used for unloading gravel or something, looks a bit disused. South of Universita station (where Plat. 4 is now blocked off by a metal screen) work was under way on the new bridge over the road and river.

At Tel Aviv the contractor at the north end of the Ayalon scheme is Y. Shomroni. A third island platform is being built at Arlosoroff. Got some photos of work in progress on tripling the line at great bother and expense so soon after building the original double track. Plasser & Theurer REM70-E went past northbound, then IC3 sets 18/07/21 for Haifa. At 13.45 755 came through pushing D/D's for Hod Hasharon/Kfar Saba.

At HaHaganah 13.55 IC3 20/ 30/ 12/ 04/ 05, and 754 pushing 315/ etc. as ecs. The 14.00 to Binyamina had 740. Caught the 14.08 to Ashdod, loco 741 on 443/ 444/ 445/ 407. At Darom sidings on the east side 739 on 607/ 613/ 620/ 624/ 77/ 602/ 81/ 640 (full generator) - there is another siding, new I think, for reversing ecs. on the West side between the running lines and the embankment behind which is the old Darom station. Accessible only from the north, and with a fence dividing it from the running lines, only one opening for access. Managed to squeeze shots of the new airport flyunder through the curving upstairs window; there no sign really any more of Sarafand Junc., Ganei Aviv is a vast modern ugly concrete housing development on the south side of the line and is clearly big enough to support a new station. And so into Lod.

Lod impressed me. The modernisation work is finished, the platforms have been planted with gardens and trees which will no doubt grow a lot more; there is a very impressive new footbridge to supplement the subway which has also been cleaned up. A Café at the north end of the main old station building on Plats. 1/2 has tables out on the platform. The tracks all looked clean and newly-ballasted.

In the sidings 732 on a rake of e.c.s. with 636/ etc., two 24 Resh 4wh. hoppers and then a rake of more ballast hoppers including a type new to me, 53.001, 006, 013, 014, 015 etc. Resh. Also Kirow (Leipzig) track crane No. 17 and a Geismar trolley, which was shunting bogie rail flats 1867/ 1859/ 1868.

At 14.26 a northbound to Netanya was formed of 421/ 455/ 456/ 451 pushed by 759. IC3 sets 29/ 26/ 09 (the latter in "WOW" all-over advertising livery for some Telecom wheeze) came out of the depot area, the sidings have been to some extent realigned, from

the footbridge (which also has lifts) one could also see that empty units from Tel Aviv still come in at the north end of the station, curve round to the west of the station area into several (seven?) parallel sidings, can then pull forward into the single long headshunt parallel to the Rehovot line and then reverse into the storage / depot area itself.

At 14.42 IC3 set 25 and another went southbound. Saw 756 on 4 D/D's coming from the sidings. Each island platform is now bi-directional.

Realised that in fact the Beit Shemesh trains really do not stop at Lod any more but pass through non-stop, rather bizarrely. So had to return to Tel Aviv after all - no extra ticket as I hadn't left the platform barriers. This time I could just make out a gap in the vegetation where the Sarafand line had been.

The 15.04 from Beersheba to Binyamina had 734 on 419/ 476/ 477/ 483. The 15.20 to Rishonim, 755 on 469/ 468/ 467/ 416. 732 headed the 15.32 HaHaganah - Haifa. 747 arr. at 15.35 pushing from Haifa, train terminates here, formed of 301/ 333/ 313/ 316/ 317/ 337/ 330/ 341.

Got the 15.39 HaHaganah - Beit Shemesh formed of IC3 sets 14/ 22; As we left, 733 was pushing N-bound on 410/ 452/ 453/ 454. 747 was on the new siding on the R. with its stock, waiting to reverse and head back up north. At the flyunder the two current tracks spread out and the new lines will join up from within, there is one track already laid down into the tunnel with a couple of points laid in, by km. 10. We went non-stop through Kfar Habbad and Plat. 3 at Lod, then over the points and to the Ramle line, the new station with platform on R. At Naan IC3's 08/ 25 were waiting to cross us - it could be timetabling factors which prevent the Lod stop, and this might change with doubling - there was as yet no sign of any doubling or new alignment over the Lod - Naan stretch. Then onto the refurbished Jerusalem line, lots of new bridge abutments etc., a loop at Wadi Sarar, and at 16.17 we arrived at Beit Shemesh.

At Beth Shemesh the guard wouldn't let me go down the subway to the island platform (not yet in use, though complete) to look at some newish-looking black-painted rail wagons in a different numbering scheme owned by the contractors. "ISTR 01", marked "Marchandises Roulante" and "I Track". So I asked where the Jerusalem buses went from - typically, from the main road a stiff climb up, there is no actual 'coordination', but I walked up and just before the bus stop was hooted by a Sherut to Jerusalem, a little white minibus, and decided to take it. 12 NIS. The driver spent most of his time on one or two or, on one occasion, THREE phones at the same time (one, admittedly, was a hands-off radio affair.)

And so I came to the Eternal City once more. The roadworks and improvements are indeed impressive, the traffic also.

At a conference until lunchtime on 22nd. April. By 13.00 we were finished, I got my camera and took an 18 bus to the

Gonen/Malha/ 'Jerusalem Canion', which was a half-hour ride. I found my way through the car park to the Canion entrance - it is clearly designed for car-borne traffic - and found eventually a shop selling film in Hamashbir and bought a box of four. By the end of the afternoon I had used them all!

Not that far away - but across some busy roads and scrub-land - I noted a big concrete structure under construction and I managed to get across, pick my way through a hole in the fence and walk nonchalantly past the contractors' huts, and it was indeed the new station - four platforms being built, very high and massive station buildings, all concrete of course though already beginning to be faced with Jerusalem stone.

I walked around and took a lot of pictures at both ends, of concrete being poured, a mechanical chisel at work, men trying to fit a drainage pipe, etc., then simply walked along the trackbed towards Jerusalem. The first kilometre or so is cleared as though for a double track - under the first road bridge and just up to the second. Then the old rails are still there, mostly on steel sleepers (marked "PR B.S.75 Colvilles 1933" or "PR BS 75 GKB 1933"), here and there wood sleepers (33 together near Beil Safafa, and at the level crossing), at km. 84 the kilometre post has one side broken off, at one place a hole has been dug through the embankment for a new footpath, here and there are relics of signalling equipment, signs, kilometre posts, even an old 25 Taf van body painted green and now largely matchwood but once converted inside to some sort of room. At km 85 the distant signal for the Koenig level crossing, a footpath has been tarred over the rails, the L.C. barriers have been totally removed, the signal box stands shuttered and overgrown.... Took lots of photos through Beit Safafa and up towards Rehov Koenig and until Derech Beit Lechem, it is quite clear this bit of line will not be totally easy to restore, if ever. As is often the case, I feel that no-one else will ever take these pictures, and I won't come this way again..... Ran out of time and film before actually entering the station area, but I have done this a year back. Some bits of the old fencing made out of n.g. rail have been semi-dismantled.

Sunday 25th. April. Eve: Went to meet Sybil Ehrlich at Tahanah Merkazit (Central Bus Station) for the 19.00 bus to Beit Shemesh, after meeting with Evyatar Reiter. We just missed the 19.00 415 bus, but got the 19.15 416 Express bus, which went down the main road, left at the Sha'ar HaGay flyunder interchange, past Shimshon Junc., stopped at the level crossing to let the 19.46 (two IC3's) depart, then wound its way round the town. At 20.00 we stopped and everyone stood in the aisle for a minute to mark Yom HaZikaron (Memorial Day for Fallen Soldiers), there were ceremonies on at various places and the old ruined road vehicles in the wadi from the battles of 1948 had been illuminated and decorated with flags.

Sybil has a lot of material on the railways in Israel. Deir Aban apparently means "stone shrine" or "stone convent", and the station only became called 'Hartuv'

when British soldiers asked some Jewish kids who were watching them in 1917 the name of their village.

Monday 26th. April 2004.

We left at 7, got a bus down to the station (NIS 4.60 is the standard fare within Beit Shemesh), and bought tickets for Kfar Saba (28.50 NIS). IC3 Units 20/ 26 were in the station for the 07.46 service. Also in Plat. 3 stood Jumbo 601 on an empty ballast train formed of 58.001 Resh, 58.005, 24.006, 24.024, 58.001, 58.014, 58.016, 24.038 and 24.035 Resh. Around were also Plasser Unimat 08-275 No. 08.002, and Kershaw ballast regulator No. 10, and visible were the French bogie flat wagons owned by the contractor. ISTR 04 is marked '19,300kg.' weight, 20.00m over buffers, marked 'TSO France, Chemin du Corps de Garde 21 BP NB 7750-1 Chelles Cedex, France'.

We set off on time, at km. 39.9 is an LC, looked out for the faint remains of Sejed near km. 39.5 without success, (next day on a double-decker one could look down and see some stone remains), at 38.5 is a distant signal for Nahal Soreq, km. 38.3 the home signal, km. 38.0 the headshunt buffer and loop point. An overbridge is being built to replace a level crossing for a road from the south down the hillside before the army camp. At km. 37.1 the other point at the end of the loop, the old station building ruins still stand on R., a new loop has been built on L. Then we cross Road 3, the level crossing is at km. 36.7, and start the winding section to Naan. At km. 34.3 a concrete occupation bridge has been built over the line. Km. 33.5 an LC, and later a bridge over a road, km. 32.4 a bridge over a farm track, and we traverse an embankment with new concrete retaining walls. Then the Road 6 overbridge at km. 31.06, at 31.2 the distant signal, we curve right through a grove of trees, the Beer Sheba line comes in from our left, at km. 30.1 the points connecting the two lines, (just north of the km. 1 post on the Beer Sheva line) and then Naan - into track 2, there are three tracks here. Crossed IC3's 36/ 17 / 01 on a Beit Shemesh train. km. 0 for the Beer Sheva line is north of the signal box.

Comparing with the video of the trolley ride in Feb. 1999, it is clear that the line has been transformed in some respects but not all. For example, it curves as before - and yet there appear to be, near km. 33, new, wide cuttings with gently-graded banks, still bare of vegetation. Maybe something has been 'shaved' off the tops of some of the minor summits, maybe cuttings and occupation bridges have been built to eliminate a level crossing here and there, though the main ones over busy roads remain. Here and there it seems the line is also raised higher on low embankments with concrete retaining walls holding the earth up. There has clearly been a total removal of all ballast, a digging-down to new foundations, laying of new hardened and rolled trackbed, new drainage, totally new culverts and bridges, so it is effectively a new railway on the old route. But why not eliminate some of the curves in that case, even eliminate the detour via Nahal Soreq totally?

We paused at Ramla (a sign indicates the 'Pinat Hamtana' or 'Waiting Area'), then there is a new bridge over a road, very scrubby and unattractive semi-urban scenery filled with rubbish, and into Lod, non-stop through track 4.

At TA Darom sidings there was a push/pull set on the solitary siding on the L., (which DOES have a buffer stop at the end, though hard to see in a bush, and concrete sleepers on the rails act as the real deterrent to going too far - the siding is fenced off from the running lines, with an arched gateway to provide access for personnel) and on the R. 753 on 607/ 613/ 620/ 624/ 77/ 601 (?) / 81/ 640 Generator. Passed 751 on D/D's at HaHaganah. N. of HaShalom is the 'Mozes Bridge', 'Gesher Mozes' (not Moshe). A train of old stock went south at 08.00, we paused for sigs. to let it pass then crossed over to the R.-hand track and into Plat. 3 at Merkaz. (There are signs indicating where a loco and a 'double-deck' set should stop: 'Nekudat Atzira Du-Komati'.) A new island platform 5 & 6 is being built here at Merkaz. (Who would have thought a few years ago a 6-platform station would ever be necessary?) Apart from the footbridge, there is now a one-way flow of passengers, with those departing going out through the HQ gate and the entrance used only for arrivals. IC3 sets 27/ 21 entered Merkaz from N. 08.36. The km. 93 post is still at the N. end of the platforms.

We went onto the 3rd. track until Universita - work is under way on the bridge at the south end of the station for the fourth track eventually - crossed 732 on D/D. Then curve R. past the remains of the open-air cinema. Just west of the level crossing west of Bnei Berak station on the main road, another large level crossing is being constructed. At Bnei Berak 117 stood alone at the station throat, noted 60.243 Tet, a crane with 50.059 Shin, rows of grain hoppers standing behind stacks and stacks of concrete sleepers and track panels, several P-way vehicles. At km. 10.5 is the far point at Petach Tikva Segulah. The junction for the line down right to Rosh HaAyin (now 'South') is at km. 12.2. It was impossible to make out where Olamit Junc. for the 'old' Petah Tikvah line had once been. At Rosh HaAyin North (the triangle is complete, the track in from the now-disused Rosh HaAyin South station and eventually Lod looks used) crossed 759 on D/D's. The trackbed beyond is for double track but only one has been laid most of the way, the former main line trackbed is at one point visible on the R., there is an old stone viaduct and then it veers off R. under a modern road bridge, but the new line veers a little to the W. and then terminates at the high-level Kfar Saba-Hod Hasharon (there are different versions of the name) on an embankment adjacent to a large cemetery. Both tracks go on for a few hundred metres to buffer stops, so one has to go down and up to get to the other platform.

(Rows of chairs were being laid out at the cemetery for the Yom HaZikaron commemoration; flags at all stations were at half-mast, and symbolic flames lit by electric light

bulbs were positioned at station entrances.) We walked along Nordau to Herzl, the main street, and found a procession for Yom HaZikaron was formed on one of the carriageways and the police had blocked off the road, so walked back to the station. As usual, everywhere we went it was "Azzur Letzalem!" ("No Photography!") but Sybil got quite irate and explained to several guards and others that it was NOT 'assur', that it was O.K. with a normal if not a video camera, that we were 'Hovevei Rakevet' (Railway Enthusiasts) and knew Benny Naor, and so forth. But it is a nuisance that we had no simple 'Ishur' from Benny, who maintains that since photography is officially permitted there is no need for such. In fact the guys on the ground don't know this, and of course are paid to keep a lookout for anyone behaving suspiciously, i.e. differently. And exactly here a plaque at the entrance reminds of the security guard A. Kostyuk who was killed by a bomber a week after the station opened..... so they do have a point. (The station is now renamed in his honour on some timetables etc., though not on the platform signs). And maybe there was an extra alert because of Yom HaZikaron/Yom HaAtzma'ut.)

We bought tickets to Rishonim for NIS 24.00 and got the 09.48 train there - 757 on 430/ 429/ 437/ 405. The loco was hauling southbound, pushing northbound, as seems to be the case with all the D/D sets. (The push/pull sets are the other way, with the loco at the north end. It is only the trains of old mixed stock that bring locos at the south end of southbound main-line trains, and I suspect these do not now go north of Akko.)

At Rosh HaAyin Tzafon crossed 7017/ 7036/ 7001 again from Beit Shemesh. It means that Kfar Saba has alternate trains to Beit Shemesh and Rishonim. At Bnei Berak crossed 751 again with 450/ 449/etc. At TA Merkaz IC3's 03/ 09/ 32 headed northbound at 10.14 - set 09 is in the 'Wow!' Telecomms. advertising livery. At 10.17 752 headed northbound at Hashalom on old stock, and at 10.21 756 was on D/D. In the sidings on L. at Darom stood a loco on ecs.

The headshunt and track into the 'old' T.A. Darom station sidings looks fairly disused, maybe stock is no longer shunted into here for servicing. It could go either through to Lod or reverse at the new siding. At Lod in the sidings on L. stood some rakes of ecs. - 750 on 434/ 435/ 436, 733 on 454/ 453/ 452/ 410. There were also several rows of ballast wagons, and 63.002 Daled, a fuel tank wagon.

We dep. Lod at 10.30, passed 759 northbound on D/D, went through the halt at Beer Yaakov n.s., there seemed to be no platform name boards any more and trees were overhanging the platforms, giving it a not-very-used look though it is still served by the Rehovot trains. Then we diverged right and onto the single track to Rishonim (or 'HaRishonim' on the ticket automats). The trackbed is prepared for two lines, that on the left not laid yet, at one point it seems a triangle spur may be being prepared to head

for Rehovot; there is a concrete retaining wall with the IR symbol set artistically into the concrete slabs, and a sort of set of stilts for a flyover in the middle of nowhere, presumably built so that it was ready before the line went into operation. And so into the new Rishonim station, also situated on a high embankment, massive, two side platforms linked at the buffers so one could walk round to Plat. 2. It really looked as though there were no intention for a long, long time to extend the line, since directly in front of the station where any new line would have to go there are gardens laid out, and then a dual-carriageway road. The terminus aspect looked very fixed.....

We went out for a little look at the outside, and at 11.00 the siren went and everyone stopped their cars, got out and stood next to them for two minutes for Yom HaZikaron. Then back in to buy tickets for Herzliyya (19 NIS) and get the 11.27 departure, the same train as had brought us. Since these trains wait so long at Rishonim, I cannot see why they have no time to stop at Kfar Habbad or Beer Yaakov en route. Got out at Universita at 11.59, and had time to look around a little at the building works before leaving theoretically at 12.13. In fact we passed a D/D in Beer Yaakov, at Lod there now stood 731 on D/D ecs, 756 likewise on 440/ 459/ 458/ 412. The station announcements on the electronic displays were very much out-of-synch.! At Hashalom at 11.48 749 on a 9-coach p/p. A D/D set was in the siding north of T.A. Merkaz. At Universita noted 759 on 451/ 456/ 455/ 411. IC3 sets 07/ 08 came in on an Extra to Haifa (Machir - i.e. Express) - no-one had heard any announcements, there are no indicators on the platform, only downstairs, so there was some confusion amongst passengers on the platform.) Eventually our Binyamina local came in a bit late at 12.16, absolutely packed out, 416/ 467/ 468/ 469 pushed by 760. Plat. 4 is still unconnected at the N. end.

At Herzliyya we arrived to find the new station is really only a hundred metres or so north of the old one - there is a Plat. 1 southbound, and island Plats. 2/3 northbound, though track 3 is not fully connected and was occupied by crane 11 and bogie flat 1866. There is a pedestrian tunnel to the station building, under where the new Ayalon road extension will soon go. Unfortunately the old station is now fenced off and there was no opportunity to get there to get some record shots. There is a facing crossover between the platforms - presumably the old one from when the spur to the loop and gravel siding went off there - and a new facing and trailing crossover north of the platforms.

We got the 12.50 departure to Ashdod (5 minutes late) with 748 pulling D/D's, back to T.A. Merkaz - this train was also packed out, with people sitting on steps and standing in vestibules. Here we looked at the construction works. Photographed 761 on 415/ 448/ 447 /446 northbound to Binyamina at 13.20. At 13.22 749 arr. Plat. 1 on 321/ 315/ 331/ 342/ 312/ 322/ 323/ 334/ 305. At 13.25 742 arr. from Haifa in Plat. 3 on 616(Generator)/ 639/ 643/ 609/ 617/ 601/ 76/ 638/ 111. Then our 13.34

to Beit Shemesh arrived in Plat. 4 from the South at 13.31 and reversed within three minutes, all off, security check for packages, all on, units 21/ 27. Very snappy operating by train and platform staff! 733 on Rehovot e.c.s. at Lod. From Lod to Naan takes 8 minutes, counting the stop at Ramle - this is the length therefore of the section. There was nothing for us to pass at Naan. The Beer Sheva line has a 150kph speed restriction board south from Naan. Arr. Beit Shemesh 14.17.

Here we introduced ourselves to the Station Manager again and then went for a walk onto the island platform and along the tracks eastwards. The bogie flats are not actually identical - ISTR 04 has a brown top and two rails lengthwise, ISTR 07 has a black top and crosswise battens, ISTR 02 brown with lengthwise rails, ISTR 08 black top, ISTR 01 brown top with rails. A Bulldozer on rail wheels is numbered 069. ISTR 03 was empty and ISTR 06 loaded with concrete sleepers. ISTR 05 was under the gantry, and nearby were ISTR 09 and 10. One track has 'Colvilles 1946' steel sleepers, the rest are all laid with modern concrete sleepers.

We walked along past two newly-installed buffer stops, temporary rails for tracklaying gantries had been laid out till under a new dual-carriageway road bridge which currently ends nowhere by the cement works, and with only one lane in any case connected. Then walked up, hot and dusty, to the bus stop for a bus up the hill.

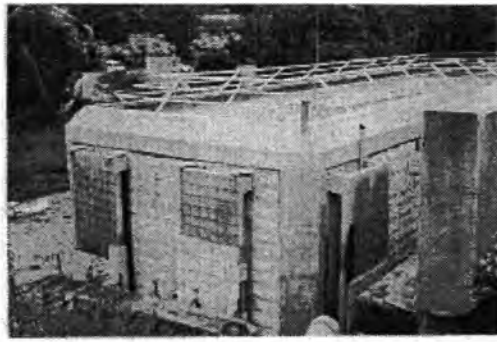
But then flaked out trying to watch the video of the ride by trolley to Jerusalem in 1999, and we gave up by Bar Goyyoral

Tuesday 27th. April. (Yom Ha'Atzma'ut (Israel Independence Day).

We went down to the 09.15 bus and got the 10.14 train - amazingly it arrived at 10.01 formed of 751 on 451/ 456/ 455/ 411 instead of the normal IC3 sets. Piped music on board. Ghastly. (Apparently there is normally a morning minyan (prayer meeting) on one of the Beth Shemesh-Tel Aviv trains!) Being Yom Ha'Atzma'ut and a public holiday there was a different timetable in force, essentially two-hourly from Beit Shemesh to Tel Aviv Merkaz, from Rishonim to Kfar Saba, from Beersheba to Haifa Merkaz and from Ashdod to Nahariyya, thus making for a more frequent service along the central shared spine of the routes. But more confusingly, although most of these services were essentially 'all stations', the Beit Shemesh service had an altered stopping pattern, going through Ramle non-stop but halting at Lod. Presumably someone is paid to think these things up. There was a large poster with the special timetable, graced (as so often) by a picture of an British Rail HST in Inter-City livery!! (Other posters portray a computer-generated 'squashed' Double-Deck set.) Arr. Lod, 734 in the depot. IC3's 22/ 11/ 188.7006/ 18/? (5 sets together) arr. on Plat. 1 S-bound to Beer Sheba at 10.35. Loco 743 stood LE in the depot, along with a D/D coach with a broken upper window. A big sign indicates work for a new depot for servicing double-deck coaches ("Misrad HaTachbura, Rakevet Yisrael, Hativah Tashtiot, Musach Kronot Du-



Photos show re-building work on the Jerusalem line near Bar Giora. Per Sybil Ehrlich.



Komatiim Slav Bet" = "Ministry of Transport, Israel Railways, Infrastructure Dept., Depot for Double-Deckers, Stage 2"), but shows a picture of IC3 sets by the building instead!

Four sets 01/ 17/ 36/ 29 formed an Ashdod - Nahariyya service, the last two coaches were off Plat. 4! We found this on our journey - several trains were simply too long for the station platforms, yet clearly the decision had been taken to run these long rakes the length of the country, and make announcements asking passengers in "the northernmost unit" to move forward - thus demanding a sense of geography in the passengers, as well as an awareness of what a 'unit' was.

Jumbo 609, looking very workstained and shabby, came out of the shed and then shunted back alongside the sanding tower. 755 was behind it inside the shed. 731 and 734 on shed by the steel corrugated shed - in the carriage sidings stood a whole array of locos and D/D sets, from L. 758, 750, 745, a set with no loco, 757, 751. In the loop sidings that link to the north end of the layout and triangle (and which are linked by hand-worked points) were two push/pull sets and at least two D/D sets. In the yard sidings on the east side of the station, and well visible from the footbridge and later from outside the station, stood two rows of loaded container wagons, a row of ballast wagons, a row of grain hoppers, two rows of e.c.s. passenger stock (old types).

The ballast rake was formed of thirteen 24 Resh wagons and one unidentifiable 58 - the 24's being , from the R. 013/ 027/ 015/ 033/ 026/ 029/ 007/ 022/ 001/ 011/ 030/ 036. In another row were 58.004 Resh, 8.002 Resh. The southernmost container wagon was 70.073 Shin with a Maersk container, and a few wagons along was a departmental flat 1125 loaded with twelve wheelsets.

We saw the 11.08 to HaRishonim in Plat. 3, formed of 733 on 454/ 453/ 452/ 410. The station announcements are in a friendly female voice and can only, I think, be 'live' and not recorded, especially as this was a special timetable - "Nossim nichbadim, Shalom! Harakevet tikaness miyad leRetzif shalosh...." ("Dear Passengers! Shalom! The train will soon be arriving at Platform Three" etc.) The cafeteria was closed on this holiday.

We then caught the 11.26 from Lod to Ashdod, formed of five sets 7027/ 03/ 09/ 188.7005/ 32. Only the first twelve IC3

sets had the 188-series number applied, and I think some have already lost it. Set 09 is in the 'Wow!' all-over advertising livery, which when looked at close-to incorporates lots of smaller photographic images, one of which is of a tram heading for 'Argentina'! Where was this taken?

At Beer Yakov there was indeed one name sign, only, and that on the northbound platform (Plat. 1) - southbound is Plat. 2 and one can walk on and off without going through automatic gates. There are signs on the platforms for "Retzif mispar Aleph, Rakavot Iekivun Tzafon, mispar Bet, Rakavot Iekivun Darom". ("Platform No. 1, Trains direction North, 2, Trains direction South".) The metalwork on the station platforms and canopies is a light green.

At Rehovot our train was too long, plats. 2/3 are the southbound island, Plat. 4 does not as yet exist apart from a fenced-off section and building with exit. The north point for the third track is at km. 119.2, just south of a newish dual-carriageway road underbridge. The N. end of the platform 2/3 is km. 119.7. The S. end point and short headhunt or spur is km. 120.2.

We passed an enormous Egged bus depot on R. At the old (British) Yavneh station there is still an operational passing loop and the remains of the citrus shed and some stone buildings, though the main old station building seems to have been demolished. The round watchtower on the east side of the line is the site of the short-lived 'Tel Yavneh' station, which lasted only about three months. It seems that the successive stations at Yavneh have gradually crept southwards, whereas those at Ramle have gradually crept northwards!

Bnei Darom station had vanished, though Sybil maintained it was better-sited than the new station, being nearer to a large crossroads. From km. 133.1, which in fact is around Peleshet Junc., there was first a loop, which had then been extended after the crossover but not yet brought into use as a second track on the east side (i.e. future southbound) all the way to Ashdod Ad Halom - which makes sense as this section is already in use for freight as well as the passenger services, which themselves will soon be extended to Ashkelon. An LC at km. 133.6, N-bound sigs. at 135.7, around 137 I think we are on the new alignment I saw being built a year ago, sweeping through a low curved cutting, but there was absolutely no sign of any other previous original alignment! The line is passed for 140 kph and 150 kph in places. At km. 138.7 S-bound sigs., we slowed at km. 139.7 for the Ashdod home signals, across an LC, km. 139.9 crossovers and then the third track diverged at 140.1, the fourth with more points at km. 140.2, and at 140.3 we entered the platform. There are now three platforms, a new station building on 1 on the west side, and an island - not yet in use and the doors still closed - Plats. 2/3 - with a fourth track bypassing this.

The first five coaches were off the platform at the south end, and people had to walk through to disembark! We looked

around a bit outside but did not have a lot of time - not even to buy chips from one of the Fried Chips dispensing machines which claim to provide you with a bag of chips ("French fries" in American) in 50 seconds for NIS 7.50!! These now stand at several stations.

So back northwards again, past the underground weapons factory museum at the kibbutz north of Rehovot, apparently half of the kibbutzniks themselves never knew it was there in the late 1940's! Hidden under a laundry or similar. At Lod 749 stood on a p/p set in the loop sidings. There was nothing at all standing at T.A. Darom. Arr. HaHaganah 12.43, (the last set off the platform), and had time to look around. The misspelt 'Northbond' sign is repeated upstairs as well, where one side of the clock was also totally wrong. The other side was correct - I was allowed by the security guard to go through the barrier to get to the Sherutim (toilets).

The 12.55 to Rishonim was formed of 733 on 454/ 453/ 452/ 410. The next Ashdod train was also formed of five IC3 units, and as I was looking from above I noted that the first two units did not have any numbers painted on the roofs, the others were 33/ 28/ 37.

Then our 13.26 from HaHaganah to Beit Shemesh was formed 759 on 451/ 456/ 455/ 411 - the same coaches as this morning, but did I get the loco number right earlier or had the loco been changed in the interim? Logic suggests the same loco and set remain shuttling all day.

Just before Lod we crossed a D/D set northbound, and at Lod itself crossed IC3's ? / 18/ 06/ 11/ 22. Then non-stop through Ramle - to double this section would not be too difficult, one bridge deck is already built for an extra track on the left, there is scrub or ex-agricultural land most of the way, but at one point a house or two would need to be demolished, near the new station. Na'an pass 13.47, Nahal Soreq loop 13.54, Beit Shemesh arr. 14.01 - i.e. about 7 mins. in section each time. "Tachanah Sofit" means the end terminus.

There was no 14Aleph bus (which theoretically connects with trains but maybe not when the timetable has been changed?) so we walked up to the bus stop, just missed a bus from Jerusalem, waited a while and got a Sherut (4 NIS each) up the hill. Hot and tired, we watched some videos - the rest of the trolley ride to Jerusalem (filmed on 8th. Feb. 1999), then a tape of things Sybil had copied from the TV - 11 minutes about the Lumière brothers and some shots of the railway, various news items on level crossings, new stations, new railcars, some adverts ("Rak Rakevet!"), a young chap answering questions on railway history for the local equivalent of 'Mastermind', etc. Then a couple of amazing documentary videos, one of Eretz Israel in 1913 made for the Zionist Congress, another of the 1920's and 1930's."

BRITISH FRONT LINE RAILWAYS IN THE NEGEV DESERT, 1917

65:11

by Paul Cotterell.

Amnon Gat of Kibbutz Re'im has conducted in-depth research and field study into the British WW1 military activities and surviving physical relics along the front line between Gaza and Irgeig for an article in the academic Hebrew publication *Cathedra*. Much of his study was inevitably, but by no means exclusively, connected with the various British railways on this front, and he has very kindly shared the results of his researches with me. These include extracts from the Unit War Diaries obtained, so Amnon informs me, from the National Archives in London, and also a few most informative contemporary maps from the same source. He tells me that, while complete sets of maps for the area may be available, he only received isolated sheets. Nevertheless, even these few are invaluable. The reference numbers of both the diaries and maps are included here for anyone wishing to research further. In addition, for the sake of convenience and comprehensiveness, I have included the pertinent extracts from the different and unidentified Unit War Diaries presented by Hugh Hughes in *Harakevet* 15:24.

Amnon and I have been in constant contact to discuss numerous points, and the following is our understanding of railway events along the military front line in 1917 and after. Comparison of these present findings with the sketch map on page 16 of *The Railways of Palestine and Israel* will immediately show that previous conjectures (mine anyway) need amending. The map of the area in my book was drawn mostly from often vague written sources alone, no official maps being then available to me, and I have no doubt that the material presented here gives a much more accurate picture. The two sketch maps with this article are simplified composites based on tracings from the originals, omitting all extraneous details which do not have a direct bearing on the railways.

It will probably be best, I think, to first list the appropriate written sources. These are not straight forward but will repay close study.

Relevant extracts only from the Unit War Diaries.

Unidentified extracts presented by Hugh Hughes [ref. *Harakevet* 15:24]:

4/5/17: Decided to lay [standard gauge] branch to Shellal.

14/5/17: Shellal branch: Km 10.62; Rasum station begun.

18/5/17: Shellal branch: Km 16.7; Sheikh Nuram [sic] station started.

27/5/17: Work on extra crossing stations put in hand [these believed to be crossing loops on Shellal line].

4/7/17: Bridge over Wadi at Shellal finished.

11/7/17: Shellal branch to Imara (Km 30.7).

31/7/17: Ordered to pull up Imara station & 2 miles west of it.

8/8/17: Work on pulling up end of Shellal branch completed. [This lifting of rails might have been done to provide urgently needed track elsewhere: see, for example, the next reference. However, it is more likely that the standard gauge line had simply moved too far forward at too fast a pace and Allenby, being unwilling to

risk premature discovery of British intentions in the direction of Beersheba, ordered the track lifted beyond Shellal until closer to the eve of battle when it was relaid. This version of events appears to agree with further extracts from the War Diaries and Massey given below].

9/8/17: New siding for Flying Corps on Shellal branch.

1/9/17: Asked by DOMG to lay 2' 6" gauge line from Belah round to the artillery positions for heavy ammunition, etc. [Amnon has reminded me that Falls & Becke in their History of the Great War. Military Operations Egypt & Palestine, Parts I & II record the line as built in August. I do not have this source to hand, but this quote from the War Diaries indicating that the 2ft 6in gauge railway was laid in September sounds quite unequivocal to me.]

21/9/17: WO wired suggesting 60cm material instead of 2' 6" gauge in forward area.

22/10/17: All parties taken off doubling [main line from Kantara] and sent to Shellal branch for extension to Karm.

27/10/17: Shellal: Track Km 38.8.

29/10/17: Shellal: Karm station finished...

7/11/17: Shellal branch to be extended again.

4/2/18: Karm line Km 46.75...

17/2/18: Karm branch to [Km] 47.7...

28/2/18: Karm branch to Km 48.5...

1/4/18: Karm branch being extended to Bir Saba.

5/5/18: Bir Saba line: at Bir Saba station, Km 59.7.

116th Railway Company Royal Engineers [ref. WO 95 4410]:

Shellal Junction - (date?): During the month of July [1917] the Company had been engaged on the continuation of the SHELLAL Branch from 25K to 31K, the construction of IMARA Station (31K) & the construction of an Ammunition Siding at SHEKH [sic] NURAN Station...A dead end siding was also constructed at IMARA Station [16/7/17]...

Karm - 19/4/18: On 19.4.18 the Company moved to KARM & on 24.4.18 to IRGEIG, being employed on the continuation of the KARM Branch of the Military Railway towards BEERSHEBA.

Irgeig - 1/5/18: During the month of May the 166th Rly Coy has been engaged on the continuation of the railway to BEERSHEBA, which station was opened for standard gauge on May 8th. **266th Railway Company Royal Engineers** [ref. WO 95 4410]:

Shellal - 23/10/17: Company engaged on Construction of Extension of SHELLAL Branch from the WADI GAZI [sic] to KARM. Coy laid in 800 metres of track E. of WADI Bridge.

Shellal - 24-25/10/17: Company engaged in Construction of IMARA Station.

Shellal - 26/10/17: Company laid in 800 metres of track between IMARA and KARM Stations.

Shellal - 27/10/17: Company engaged on Construction of KARM Stn. Arrived KARM Stn. 7a.m. during the engagement of Hill 630 and proceeded with work as per programme. Casualties in this Coy - NIL. Damage to track and Rolling Stock - NIL...

Shellal - 28-29/10/17: Company engaged on Construction of KARM Station.

Shellal - 30/10/17: Loaded up Camp and left by train leaving SHELLAL JUNCTN. 1430 [to Maadan on main line from Kantara].

S h e i k h Zowaid - 18/4/18: Company moved to KARM. Left S H E I K H ZOWAID [on main line from Kantara] 1015 arrived KARM 1315.

Karm - 18-24/4/18: Company employed on Construction of KARM - BEERSHEBA LINE.

K.51 Beersheba Line - 25/4/18: Company moved from KARM to K.51 BEERSHEBA LINE. Left KARM 0845 - arrived K.51 1030.

K.51 Beersheba Line - 25-30/4/18: Company employed on construction of KARM - BEERSHEBA Line.

Irgeig - 1-8/5/18: Company employed on Construction of line from IRGEIG to BEERSHEBA.

Kafr Jinnis - 9/5/18: Company moved from IRGEIG to KAFR JINNIS. [Though not related to our present topic it is worthwhile noting here that 266th Company was employed on Construction of Light Railways - BEIT NABALA Branch between 10-13/5/18].

Sheria - 22/6/18: Coy. moved light to SHELLAL BRIDGE 2330 hours.

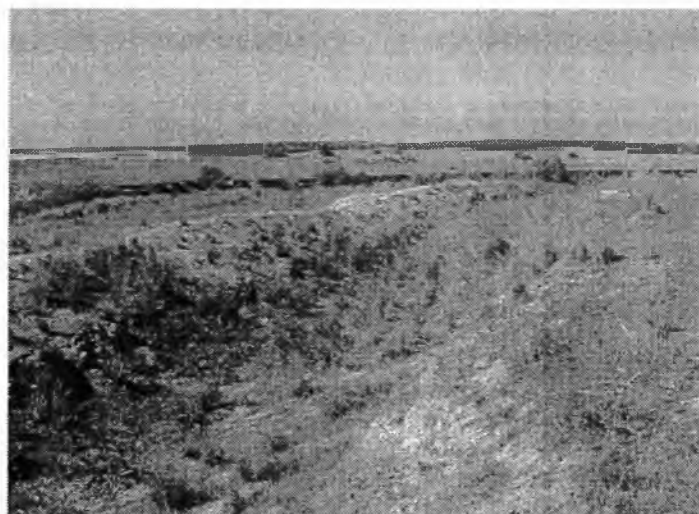
Shellal Bridge - 23/6/18: Coy. arrived SHELLAL BRIDGE 0500. Coy. engaged in removing deviation (low level) at SHELLAL Bridge and laying a new Gravel Siding there. [These notes appear to relate to second bridge; see text below on Rafah-Beersheba line].

Shellal Bridge - 24/6/18: Coy. returned to SHERIA 0930.

265th Railway Company Royal Engineers. [ref. WO 95 4718]:

14/9/18: Laid & completed 231 metres siding at Wadi Hannafish.

From How Jerusalem was Won by W.T. Massey (Constable 1919):



1. Looking north-west along the 2' 6" gauge light railway parallel to the Wadi Gaza in February 2004. Remains of a shallow cutting can be made out running from the bottom left towards the top right of picture. (Photo: Amnon Gat)



2. Looking east across Wadi Shellal towards Park Eshkol in February 2004, showing the original concrete foundations of the second trestle bridge. (Photo: Amnon Gat)



3. Looking west along the new replica trestle bridge over part of Wadi Shellal in March 2004. The original track curved slightly to the right on the other side of the Wadi and then left into a short cutting which was dug by Sikh Pioneers of the British Army (see contemporary photos in AWM Photo Database). (Photo: Erez Shalev.)



4. The new replica trestle bridge over part of Wadi Shellal built on the original concrete piers, seen in March 2004. (Photo: Erez Shalev.)

Pages 49-50:

"When the Corps Commanders began working out the details [of the attack on Beersheba] two of the greatest problems were transport and water. Only patience and skilful development of known sources of supply would surmount the water difficulty, and we had to wait till the period of concentration before commencing its solution. But to lighten the transport load which must have weighed heavily on Corps Staffs, the Commander-in-Chief [Allenby] agreed to allow the extension of the railway east of Shellal to be begun sooner than he had provided for. It was imperative that railway construction should not give the enemy an indication of our intentions. If he had realised the nature and scope of our preparations he would have done something to counteract them and to deny us that element of surprise which exerted so great an influence on the course of the battle. General Allenby, however, was willing to take some risks to simplify supply difficulties, and he ordered that the extension to a railway station north-east of Karm should be completed by the evening of the third day before the attack, that a Decauville line from Gamli, not to be begun before the sixth day prior to the attack, was to be completed to Karm by the day preceding the opening of the fighting at Beersheba, and that a new Decauville line should be started at Karm when fighting had begun, and should be carried nearly three miles in the Beersheba direction early on the following morning. These new lines, though of short length, were an inestimable boon to the conductors of supply trains. The new railheads both of the standard gauge and light lines were well placed, and they not only saved time and shortened the journeys of camel convoys and lorry transport columns, but prevented congestion at depots in one central spot."

Page 54:

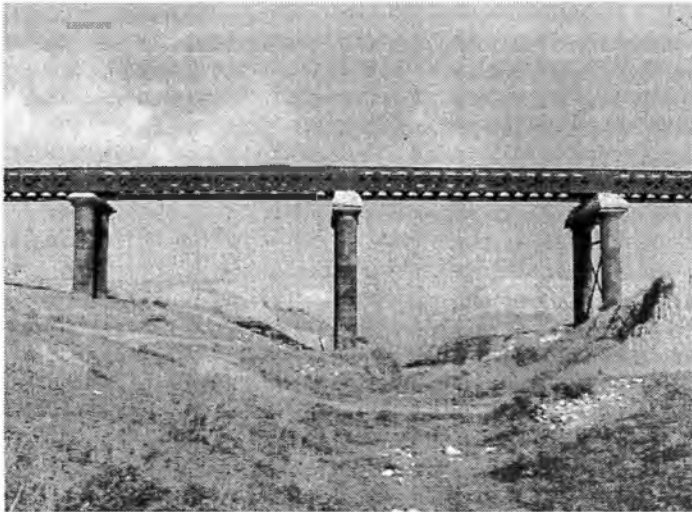
"The principal work carried out by the XXth Corps during the period of concentration consisted in laying the standard gauge line to Imara and opening the station at that place on October 28; prolonging the railway line to a point three-quarters of a mile north-north-east of Karm, where the station was opened on November 3; completing by October 30 the light railway from the east bank of the wadi Ghuzze at Gamli via Karm to Khasif..."

We can now examine each railway individually, highlighting certain points arising from the above extracts and including findings from Amnon's researches and field trips:

1) The 2ft 6in gauge line from Deir el Belah.

This line appears on no known map. It was evidently built in September 1917 (ref. *Harakevet* 15:24) and presumably closed the following November. At the Survey of Israel (Merkaz HaMipui) in Tel Aviv, Amnon discovered some British aerial photographs of 1945 in which it is possible, even at such a relatively late date, to make out lengthy sections of this narrow gauge formation, though not in the immediate vicinity of Deir el Belah for which there were no photographs. These aerial views are partially corroborated by field study which shows that short and faint remains of shallow cuttings between the Wadi Gaza and Wadi esh Sheria could still be discerned even in 2004!

The proximity of 2ft 6in and standard gauge sidings at Deir el Belah is inferred (there being no hard evidence



5. The metal bridge over Wadi Hanafish, in February 2004, showing the remains of original earth embankment beyond. (Photo: Amnon Gat)

for this) but is at least logical for the purposes of transshipment. It seems that the narrow gauge initially took a sweeping curve to the north-east to circumvent a ridge of high ground before turning south-east to cross the Wadi Gaza at an acute angle (probably without benefit of a bridge) and continued along the north bank of the Wadi esh Sheria to the vicinity of El Mendur. This provided a route for supplies and ammunition primarily to the British forces opposite the Turks dug in along the front line from Gaza to the north, and possibly also to British units around El Mendur facing the defensive system of enemy trenches further east which was anchored by the main Turkish fortifications at Abu Hareira.

2) The 60cm gauge line from Gamli to El Khasif.

Most of this route (east of the Wadi Gaza) does not appear on any known official map and is mainly extrapolated from the quotations in Massey's book, supported by a rough sketch in Wavell's *The Palestine Campaigns* that shows part of the line. From the only known detailed map

broader sense here - and it should also be noted for the unwary that there were at least two other local places which included Karm in their names). The extracts from Massey might suggest that the line was in use for a very short time, possibly no more than a week or two, with camels and lorries being used after the capture of Beersheba when local supply demands would lessen considerably as the war moved north following the fall of Gaza in the first week of November 1917.

The Australian War Memorial has at least six photographs taken on the 60cm gauge line at Gamli in October 1917, some of which show locos there. Infuriatingly, these views have not been displayed on their Internet photo database since I began browsing it several years ago, though the captions are

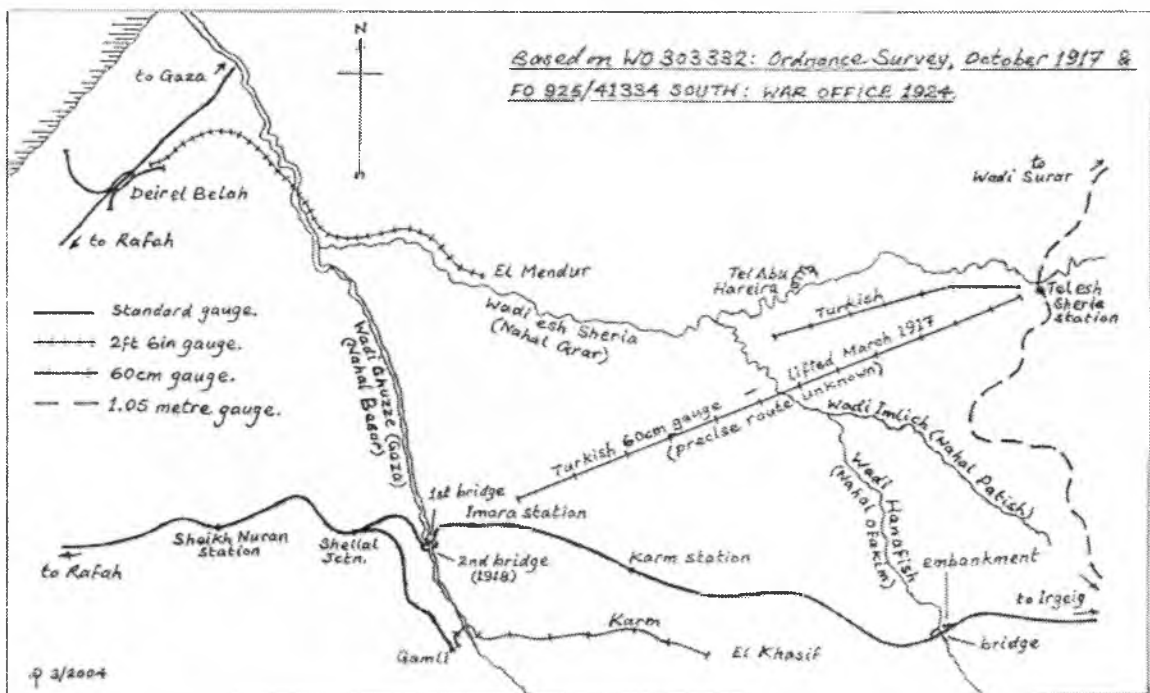
which actually includes the place (without railway), it appears that Karm consisted of just one isolated house with what may be fruit orchards, olive groves or vineyards (the name Karm seems to reflect the Arabic word for vineyard, though it may well be used in a

shown! Unfortunately the captions alone are too vague to provide anything of real value without the pictures.

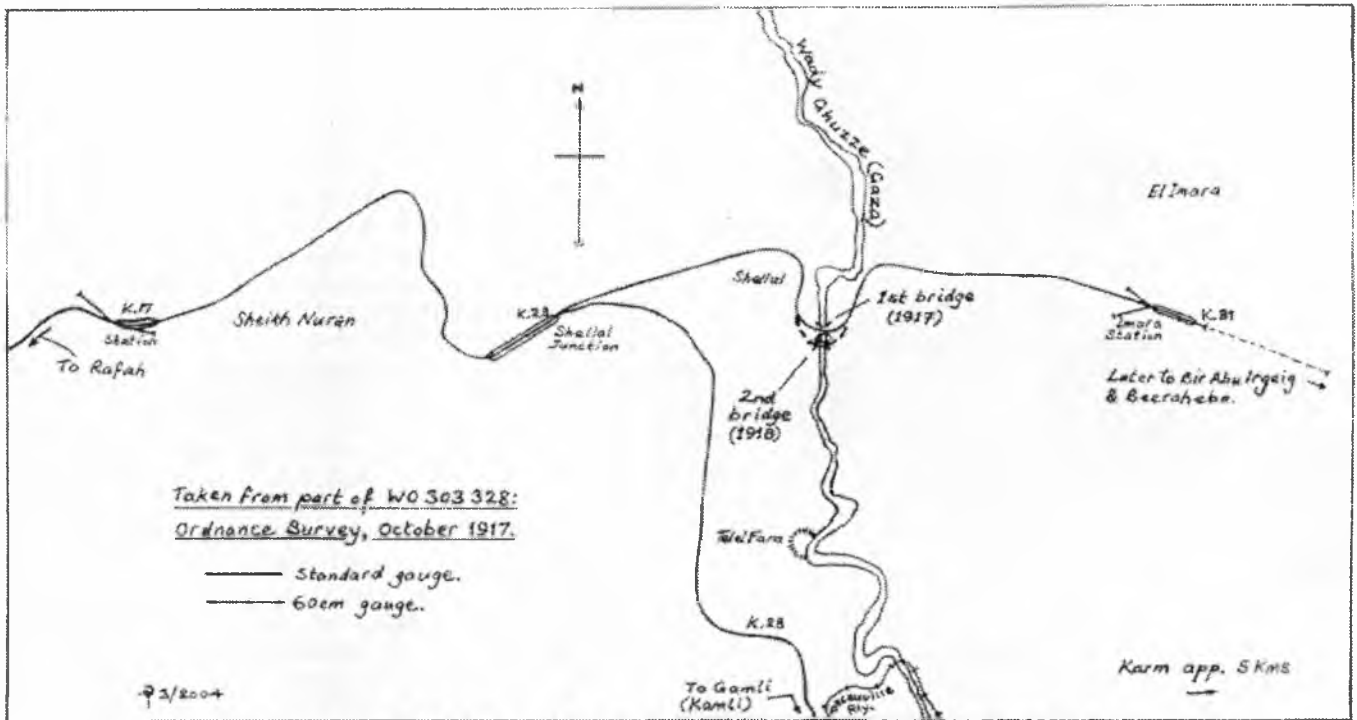
3) The standard gauge line from Rafah to Beersheba.

There are two points of particular interest relating to this line. The first concerns the wooden trestle bridge over the Wadi Gaza at Shellal, contemporary photos of which can be found in more than one source. It now appears that, in fact, there were **two railway trestle bridges** here (a third was for camel and, presumably, motor transport - see AWM neg. H03772). The first railway bridge, without concrete bases, was completed in July 1917 (ref. *Harakevet* 15:24). It is thought that the very wet winter of 1917-18 undermined this trestle, with a replacement bridge having to be built in June 1918 (ref. WO 95 4410). The second timber trestle, located only 30 metres or so to the south of its predecessor, had concrete footings to avoid it being washed out also. These concrete foundations still survive (see below). In addition, Amnon assures me that it is also possible to make out remains of the approach formations to both railway trestles. The first bridge was approached through shallow cuttings, while the approaches to the second (at a lower level due to the topography) were on low embankments. Drawing A/3/4 in the IRM Archives shows the second trestle in full detail and notes it as being located at Km 26.603 and having an overall length of 88 metres.

Amazingly, some of the concrete footings of the second trestle bridge at



Map 1: Turkish and British railways along front line in Negev Desert in 1917-18.



Map 2: British railways in Shellal area 1917-18.

Shellal have recently been utilized for the building of a new replica wooden trestle over part of the wadi, presumably as an historical attraction to the adjacent Eshkol Park. The work was carried out at high speed in February/March 2004, and this short replica section (complete with rails laid on it) is remarkably faithful to the original bridge as per drawing A/3/4.

There are a hundred WW1 views of Shellal in the AWM photo database, two or three of which show the first railway trestle bridge over the "Wadi Ghuzze" and some others showing construction of the standard gauge line. But again, and most frustratingly, many of these photos are "not available" for viewing.

In *Harakevet* 22:20 Sybil Ehrlich presented a couple of photos showing the impressive metal bridge (iron or steel?) over the Wadi Hanafish (now Nahal Ofakim). This was not the only crossing of the wadi here either. It was preceded by a high embankment on the north side of the bridge (ref. WO 95 4718 seems to refer to this bridge). The original embankment survives to this day as almost as prominent a landmark as the bridge itself. The seasonal waters of the wadi have cut through the embankment and one wonders if any provision was originally made for winter floods with, say, the installation of large diameter pipes to channel the flow and avoid erosion. It is likely, though, that the embankment was not meant as more than a stop-gap measure until the bridge could be erected before the next winter rains, and the fact that it has collapsed in the middle would further suggest that no provision was made for the flow of water. From WO 95 4410 it appears that the embankment was only built in April 1918 (at the end of the rainy season) when the standard gauge railway to Beersheba was finally being pushed forward. There are four large drawings in the IRM Archives that show the Wadi Hanafish bridge (for some reason two of these are annotated in French). Three of the drawings date from late July and early August 1918. The fourth, dated 30/12/1918, indicates that the banks of Wadi Hanafish, where the bridge abutments rested, were reinforced with boulders to avoid erosion. Drawing A/3/5, originally of 30/7/1918, has later additions in red ink dated July 1923 showing that there was a plan to strengthen the bridge with extra concrete supports. This strengthening was not implemented, however, and the Wadi Hanafish bridge remains today as built in, apparently, the summer or early autumn of 1918.

(As a footnote to the standard gauge line it may be remarked that among the Australian War Memorial photos which are accessible for viewing there are numerous shots taken at Weli Sheikh Nuran [sic] where the Australian Flying Corps had an airfield. Most views are, as may be expected, of planes but there are a couple showing the railway, one of which [J00464] features Hospital Train No.9 made up of LSWR and ESR ambulance coaches. They also have a photo

[H00709] of motor ambulances loaded aboard 4-wheel flat wagons at Imara, and I imagine these two shots were taken on or about 31/10/1917 when the ambulances would have been assembled as a prelude to the attack on Beersheba. There are plenty more general views showing several places mentioned in this article and, despite the photos that are unavailable, a browse through the AWM database is still very rewarding. And addictive.)

4) The Turkish Light Railways:

These two 60cm gauge lines from Tel esh Sheria are noted in *Harakevet* 23:21 and 24:5:h with extracts from the thesis of the late Dr Walter (Pinhas) Pick. I can add nothing to what was written there, other than to note that Dr Pick's source was evidently Kress von Kressenstein's book *Mit den Turken zum Suezkanal*.

Concluding remarks:

Although I feel sure that the basic routes of these WW1 lines are now established, it is probable that more prime details have yet to be unearthed in archives around the world, and I would anticipate that the lifting of the light railways was recorded elsewhere in *Unit War Diaries* which, hopefully, have yet to come to light. Published sources are brief and scattered. I have not included a full bibliography of such material on the subject here, but reference to the bibliographies in *The Rail-*

EXPANDING SARAFAND

The railway layout of the large army base at Sarafand (Tzirifin) has featured in 32:22. More can now be added from the pages of the Lydda District Annual Report 1939-40 which gives outline details of the expansion to railway facilities there early in WW2:-

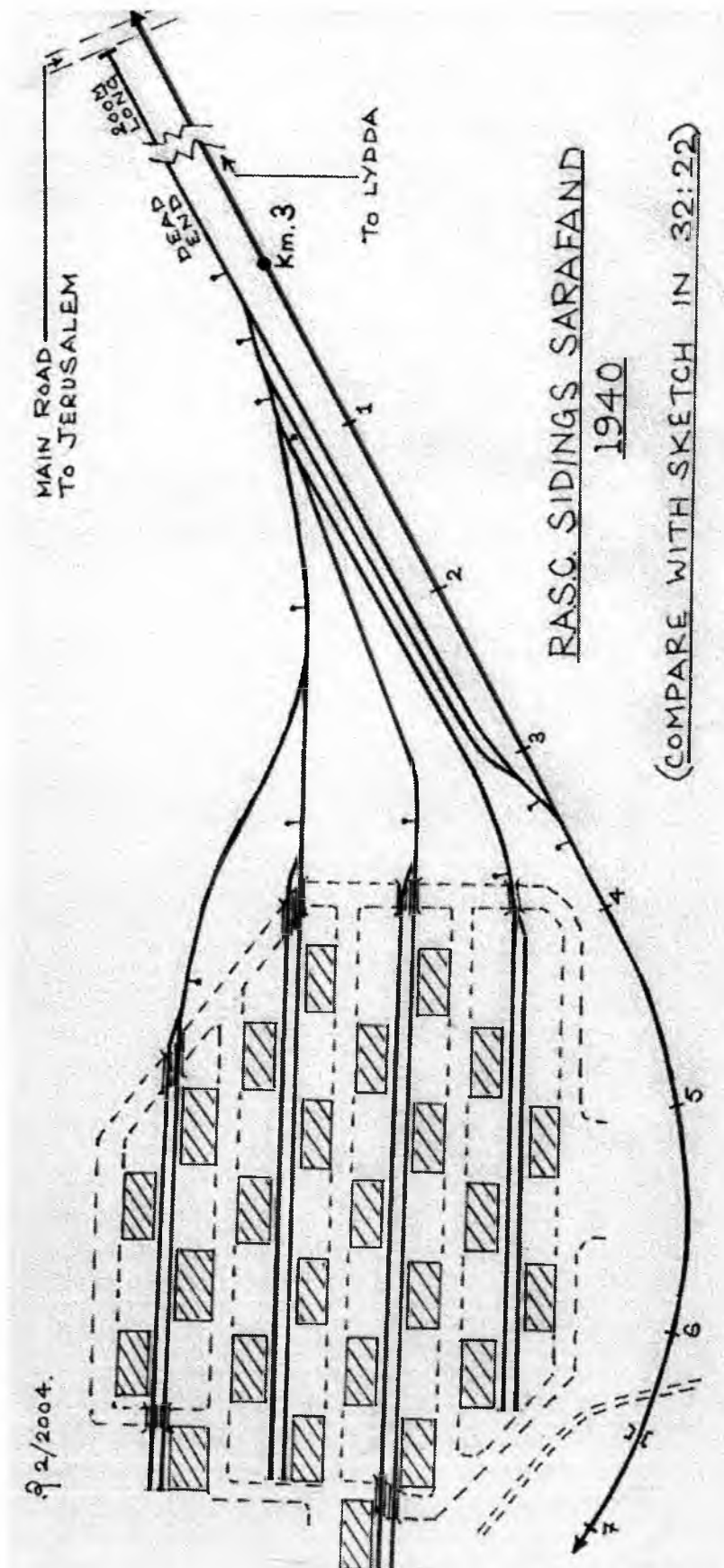
"The sidings laid at Sarafand consisted of a portion of a siding layout for a new Royal Army Service Corps Supply Depot. The work which was started on the 16th. February, 1940, consists of a loop and shunting neck from which eight sidings lead off to serve 25 large brick and concrete storage sheds on platforms. Each shed has a siding on one side and a road on the other. The complete work will comprise 3740 metres of stone ballasted sidings, 11 turnouts, 11 first class level crossings, 9 buffer stops, and 17,000 cubic metres of cutting and 17,000 cubic metres of filling with culverts, all being carried out by the Railway by direct labour [i.e. not using an outside contractor's workforce]. Up to March 31st., 1940, most of the earthwork, all the culverts, 1600 metres of track, 9 turnouts and 7 level crossings had been completed.

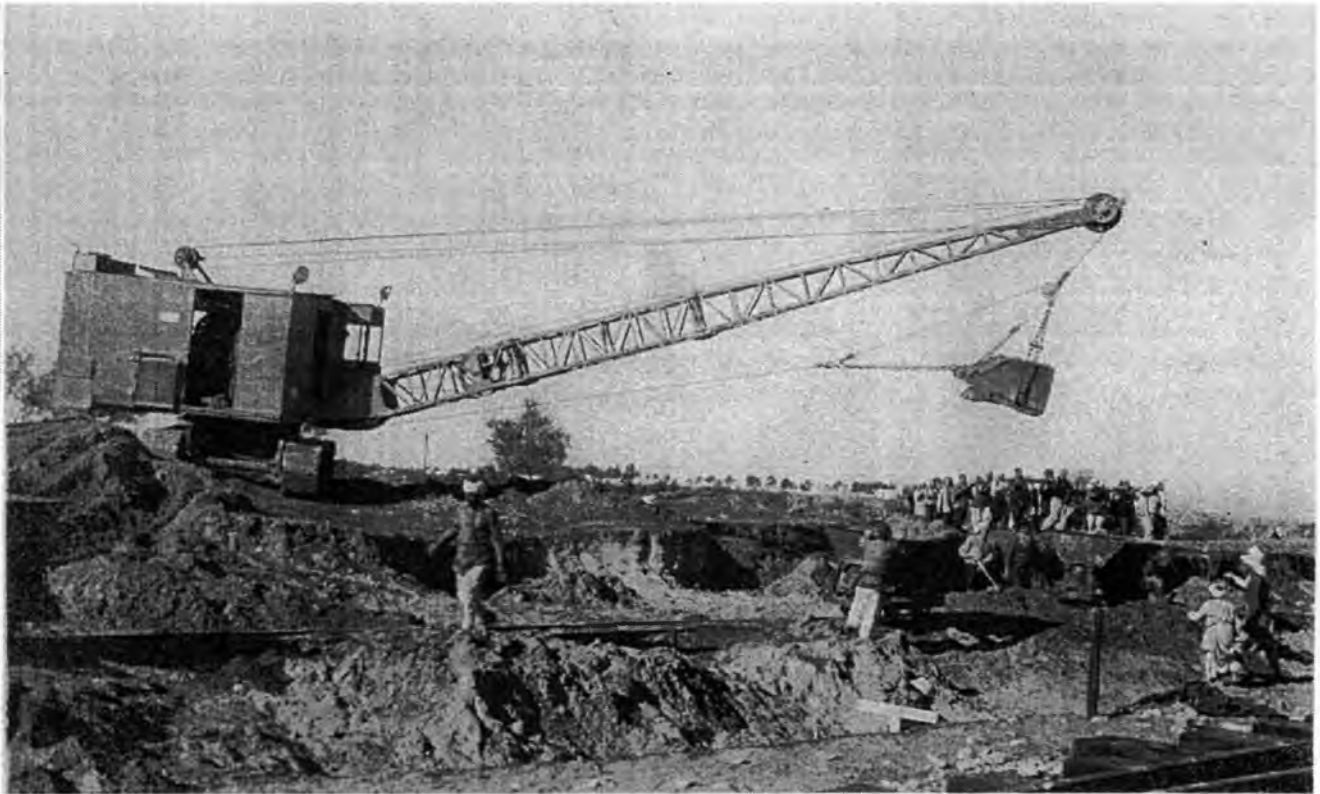
The earth for filling had to be moved by decauville trains from a cut at one end. The main Sarafand Line from which the sidings take off at Kilometres 3.368 being on a one per cent up grade, the shunting neck had to be laid on a 3.5 metres fill., A half cubic metre diesel excavator was hired for the work and was found to give good and economical service in loading the decauville trains, the best day's work being 623 cubic metres dug and loaded by this machine in ten hours."

In fact, photos show that two excavators were used. One was a dragline excavator, the second being a fixed jib excavator which, it was noted in a caption, was found more suitable for the work. PR possessed a pair of small 60cm. gauge 4-wheel Hunslet

ways of Palestine and Israel and Hedjaz Railway will provide a comprehensive listing of published sources, while John Browning's article 'A Military Mystery Tour' which appeared in the Industrial Railway Record 141 of June 1995 and Keith Taylorson's book *Narrow Gauge at War (2)* published by Plateway Press in 1996 can now be added to them. But primary research in archival collections of old files and maps etc will still be essential to put more meat on these rather bare bones.

I am most grateful to Amnon Gat for his very considerable help with this article and also for making useful suggestions concerning the final draft. Any mistakes are mine alone, however. Thanks are due also to Erez Shalev of Kibbutz Be'eri for photos of the new replica trestle at Shellal.





"The dragline excavator filling two 60cm. gauge tip wagons (one numbered 35) at Sarafand, probably in March 1940. Gangs of labourers carry what might be lengths of rails in the background."

diesel locos (noted in past issues of 'Harakevet'), and from photographic evidence in the Lydda District Annual Report we can identify HE 20hp. 1864 of 1937 as being employed at Sarafand, and can even estimate fairly accurately the period it was used on these works. It had been returned to Lydda by 2/3/1940, following attention at Qishon Works, and was no doubt forwarded to Sarafand a day or two later. The Sarafand expansion job was finished sometime in April 1940, in which month Hunslet 1864 was sent off to Qishon again for more repairs following "a spell of hard and continuous work.... at Sarafand." This means it probably worked for about five weeks in total on this job, the other Hunslet tractor (10/12hp. 1836 of 1936) being laid up at Qishon and unavailable at the time.

65:13

BRITISH OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHY



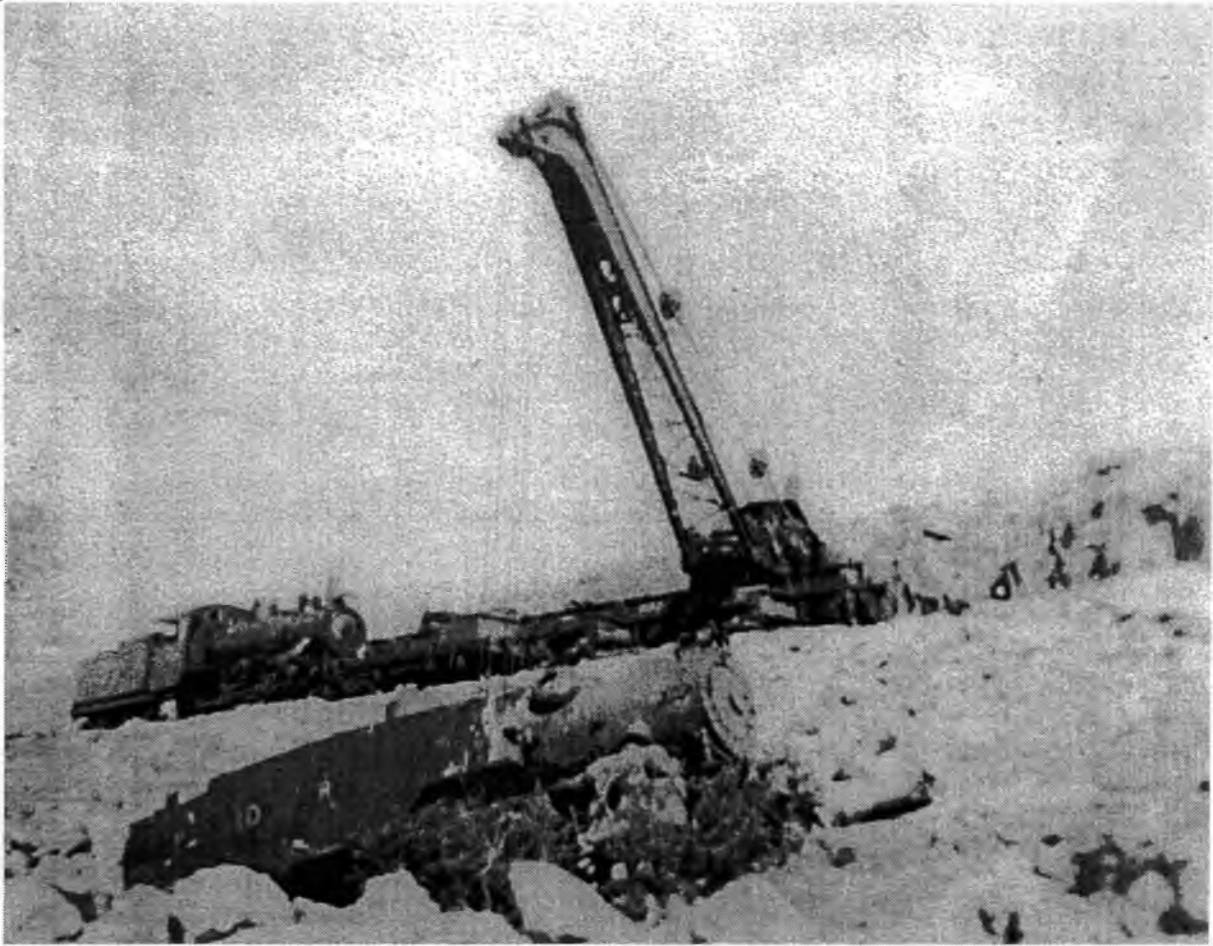
Reid & Son.
Publishers.

THE MAIN STREET, JAFFA.

P.O. Box 1481
Cairo.

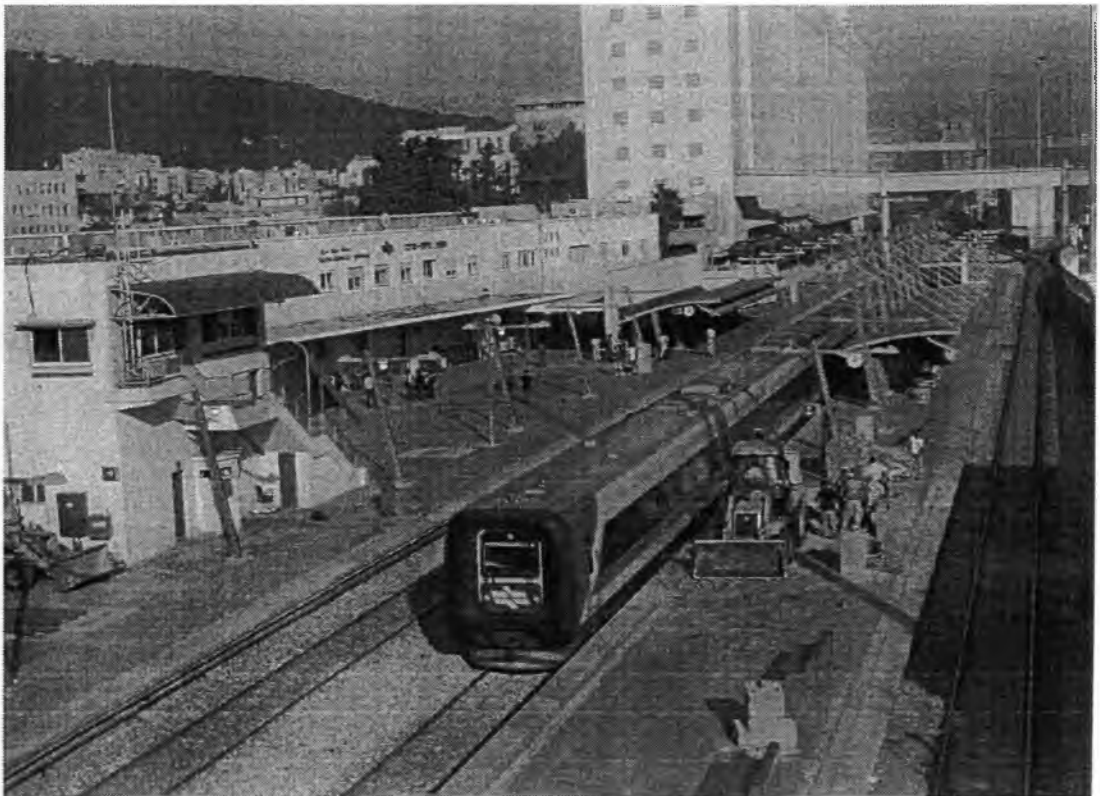
Jaffa. The rails of 'Little Terezina' can be seen at left, curving past the clock tower, proud of the road surface. The occasion is unknown - possibly in 1918-1919? There appears to be a military band roped together for safety in the middle of the square, various officers stand around like mad dogs in the midday sun (only short shadows at left), and troops hold the expectant crowds back. Despite the car waiting at the entrance, the crowd have more interest in the photographer. Clearly someone Very Important is imminently expected. Picture courtesy of Graham Russell, via Paul Cotterell.

65:15



Recovering Baldwin 4-6-2T No. 10 following sabotage near Bittir in 1946. See Plate 81 in 'The Railways of Palestine and Israel' which shows the same incident from a different angle and before recovery operations began.

65:16



Another view of Haifa Central Signal Box without the footbridge which once linked it to platforms 2 and 3. (Photo: Eitan Rimon, courtesy of Aharon Gazit.) see page 3



*Two views of Nahariyya station by the Editor
Top - view from South, lower from North*