

HaRakevet

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הרכבת

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67:1.

IR 'Jumbo' Co-Co No. 603 at Har Tzin, current terminus of the IR freight line into the Negev. The loco is running round the special train organised by the DGEg, 25.10.2004. See article inside. (Photo: Tomas Meyer-Eppler.

EDITORIAL.

With this issue yet another Series ends, and you should find a Subscription Renewal Form attached. It would help us enormously if you were to fill this in and send it off pretty soon! It is always a bit of a gamble knowing how many copies to print - we lose money in any case on each number, as so many copies go free of charge to various Libraries and Institutions, but the big question is always whether we will have a box of left-overs or whether we will instead run short! In recent months urgent requests for back numbers have seen some issues absolutely sold out. And this series has made a larger financial loss than previous ones, as we have gradually expanded page numbers and kept the coloured cover. It's a hobby, but it wouldn't hurt to cover all the direct costs of printing and postage!

Sources remain varied. Alas, despite various blandishments, the Editor cannot afford the time or money to plough through every magazine and it would help if someone were to send relevant items from 'Railway Gazette' or 'International Railway Journal' etc. Often what we get is a matter of pure luck or coincidence - finding something relevant at a newsstand, or being given a copy of something, or finding a Back Number of some magazine at a railway exhibition. Please never be shy to send something along. I'd rather get an item three times than not at all and, as the items in 'Other Middle East Railways' show, often sources differ greatly on the information they give.

Anyway - despite all the hectic political developments in the Middle East - here is a chance to see things from the perspective of a Railway Enthusiast. Enjoy!

The Editor.



67:3. The DGE Special Train with 603, ready for departure at Tzefa. (Photo: Tomas Meyer-Eppler).

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). AUGUST 2004 STATISTICS.

From a press release of 02.09.2004 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

2.2 million passengers were carried by the railways during August 2004 - the highest number ever carried monthly- 24% more than in August 2003; from the beginning of 2004, 15 million were carried, 18% more than in the same part of 2003.

The distribution of passenger traffic as per lines is as following:

- Tel-Aviv - Rosh-HaAyin - Kfar-Sava: 161,000 = +44%; from the beginning of 2004, 1.1 million used the line.

- Haifa-Nahariya: 175,000- +26%; from the beginning of 2004, about 1.2 million were carried.

- Tel-Aviv - Haifa: 489,000- +14%; from the beginning of 2004, 3.4 million were carried.

- Tel-Aviv - Rishonim (Rishon-Le-Zion): 67,000; from the beginning of 2004, 390,000 used the line.

- Ramla - Beit Shemesh: 57,000; from the beginning of 2004, 340,000 used the line.

The Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Yossi Mor said: "We expect to carry 23 million passengers in 2004; during October 2004, the line to the Ben-Gurion International Airport, will be opened (unlike previously announced dates of 04.09.04 or 11.09.04), hand in hand with the introduction of the new timetable with 288 trains daily, as against 260 to day; from the beginning of 2004, the railways have put an emphasis on raising punctuality as a main element of improving passenger services; The constant rise in passenger traffic from the beginning of 2004 proves that rail has become the most comfortable, safest, and most punctual mean of transport".

(b). OCTOBER 2004

STATISTICS.

From a press release of 03.11.04 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

2 million passengers were carried by the railways during October 2004, 16% more than in October 2003; from the beginning of 2004, 18.5 million have been carried; 15% more than in the same period of 2003.

The rise in passenger traffic as per lines was as following:

- Tel-Aviv-Rosh-Ha-Ayin line- 151000 = +37%; from the beginning of 2004, 1.3 million were carried.

- Tel-Aviv-Haifa line- 427,000 = +9% - 4.1 million from the beginning of 2004.

- Haifa-Nahariya line- 156,000 = +23% - 1.5 million from the beginning of 2004.

Tel-Aviv-Rishon-Le-Zion (Rishonim) line - 60,000; no comparison with previous year is possible; 490,000 from the beginning of 2004.

- Tel-Aviv-Beit-Shemesh line - 50,000; no comparison with previous year is possible; 425,000 from the beginning of 2004.

The General Manager Mr. Yossi Mor said: "on 10.10.04, we've successfully opened the line to Ben-Gurion airport, and 1,500 passengers use it daily; after the opening of the new Terminal 3 yesterday - 02.11.04 - we foresee a significant rise in passenger traffic".

(c). YOSHI MOR INTERVIEW.
(from Aharon Gazit).

An interview with Yossi Mor of

IR appeared in the 'Modi'in Times' of 16.09.2004. In this he stated that the date for the opening of the link to Ben Gurion International Airport is now set at 10th. Oct. 2004. he added that "the trains will operate directly to Tel Aviv, and as far north as Nahariya, and as far south as Beer Sheva. However, at this stage trains will have to reach Tel Aviv South and reverse there. (This will change later when, perhaps in 2007, after the Modi'in line has been completed in 2006, and a connection is built to the Lod - Rosh HaAyin line - the delay is due to the fact that the Railway Administration 'forgot' to request the right-of-way from the Lod Municipality for the use of the land. AG.) It will take just 8 minutes to reach Tel Aviv HaHaganah station. There will be a park-and-ride service at a price of \$2.67 for 24 hours - this is a special tariff for local people, and was instructed by the General Manager of the Transport Ministry, Ing. Ben-Zion Salman. Just for comparison, this is the tariff for a normal 2 hours parking at the airport!

The new terminal itself will open on 2nd. Nov. 2004 (five years later than scheduled); there will be two trains per hour in each direction, for 20 hours per day. Tickets will cost \$2.44. The traffic forecast is for 50,000 per month. which will increase the present monthly traffic of around 32 Million. The Modi'in Central Station will have a 1,000-place park-and-ride facility, and from there it will take 28 minutes to Tel Aviv.

(d). LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT AT HADERA.

On 13/09/2004 Alstom loco 746 very dramatically hit a red saloon car - Reg. 20-768-03 - near Hadera Maarav. The car's occupants had fortunately got out in time. The loco was superficially burned and was hauled back to Haifa for repair later that day. It should be noted that 746 had just returned to Israel following extensive repairs after a previous accident!

(e). NEW TIMETABLE.

The new IR timetable booklet labelled 'Winter 2004/5' has now been issued. Counting the covers, it now comprises 48 pages! General information (all in Hebrew) fills pages 2-5 and 44-47 - this includes full-page adverts for the Railway Museum and for Integrated Bus/Rail tickets. Other information includes the suburban ('Parvariim') "12 for 10" Kartisiot, and that Return Inter-City ('Beyn-Ironiim') tickets bear a discount of 10% and can also be bought 12-for-10. Reservations ('Mekomot

Shimorim') can be made for NIS 3. Express trains - "Rakevet Yeshira" - those which run non-stop between Haifa and Tel Aviv - also require a 3 NIS supplement.

Pages 24-25 in the middle comprise a colour-coded route map of IR; Nahariyya-Ben Gurion is green, Akko - Hof Carmel suburban services run parallel in red making all the same stops along this section of route; Binyamina - Ashdod-Ad Halom services are in blue, covering also the intermediate stops between Binyamina and T.A. Universita; T.A. Merkaz - Beer Sheva Merkaz is marked in orange. The line from Kfar Sava-Hod Hasharon divides, one leg going to Rishon Leziyyon-HaRishonim, the other to Beit Shemesh, and is in purple. The schematic map makes it clear that Ramla is served only by the 'purple' route, which omits any stops at Lod, and Kfar Habbad only by the 'blue' one - whereas those with a better sense of geography will understand that other trains must therefore pass through these stations without stopping.

However, within the timetable pages we find, as before, that all services are 'bundled' together to provide an overview of connections - southbound in the first half of the book, where the pages are printed in red, and northbound in the second half, printed in blue. For ease of consultation, the Friday services are printed against a grey background, the Saturday evening ones against an orange background. Station names and footnotes are in both Hebrew and English. New is that trains and stations which are accessible for the Disabled are marked with a wheelchair symbol.

The big news is, of course, the extension of Nahariyya - Tel Aviv services through to the Ben Gurion Airport. This also involves the creation of 24-hour timetabling! Those who have ever flown from Israel will know that most flights leave frightfully early in the morning, thus enabling many planes to return the same evening and not stay overnight at foreign destinations. Getting to the airport at 4am or whenever has always been an expensive problem. Not any more! At least, not for those on the main line. Services from Nahariyya depart at 02.02, 03.07, 04.07, 05.00, arriving at the airport at 03.40, 04.45, 05.17, 05.46, 06.40 and 07.09, stopping at Akko, Qiryat Motzkin, Lev HaMifratz, Hof Carmel (NOT Bat Galim), Binyamina, Hadera, Netanya and T.A. Merkaz. Trains from Ben Gurion northbound leave at 03.53, 04.53, 05.23, 06.00 and then essen-

tially at .00 and .23 throughout the day, the .23 service being 'stoppers' to Haifa Merkaz, the .00 trains omitting some stops and continuing to Nahariyya. Until now the night hours have been reserved solely for freight.

First trains from Beer Sheva northbound are at 05.46, 06.08, 06.42, 07.44 and then hourly at .44. Interesting that a simple 'clockface' timetable ('Takt' as it is called in German - does not seem achievable.)

The Friday service to Beit Shemesh is also boosted to hourly.

An internal memo for staff points out that the new timetable allows for a total of 845 trains - of which 288 are daily passenger services (previously 260), 121 are passenger services at weekends, (i.e. prior to or just after the Sabbath), there are 138 freight trains per week, and 298 'other' - light engines, empty carriage stock, engineering and other 'internal' workings.

On Fridays, 98 trains run, as against 84 formerly. 16 trains have been added to the Tel-Aviv - Rishon-Le-Zion (Rishonim) line, resulting in 2 trains/hour each direction on rush hours; the service to Ashdod has been strengthened resulting in 2 train/hour each direction in the afternoon; on the Tel-Aviv - Haifa line, 3 trains/hour each direction are operated in the afternoon, one of which each hour, is a non-stop service; finally, the service of some of the trains on the Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheva line has been extended, and they depart/arrive to/from Haifa or Nahariya.

(f). PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW TIMETABLE.

Residents living along the Haifa-Nahariya line, have recently complained to Israel Railways, as well as to the newspapers, that their lives have become insufferable in particular since the introduction of the new timetable on 10.10.04, in which the 1st train leaves Nahariya at 02.02 (to Ben-Gurion airport), while the last arrives at Nahariya at 01.32, leaving them only 30 minutes to sleep! The main complaints are against the horns - which, according to regulations, must be applied at level crossings, and there are a lot along this line; the complainers have not mentioned yet the noise of the trains itself, but this may appear soon too!

The line is hardly used for freight at night, so this is the only point not to be mentioned, unlike Europe where this is also becoming a serious problem; One wonders why the railway administration did not think about the fact, that

while the line to the airport is very welcomed, the negative by-products may create a threat!

(g). PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF INTERNATIONAL - CONSULTANTS.

From a press release of 27.10.04 by the Transport Ministry:

The Ministries of Transport and Finance and the US company P.B.I. (Parsons Brinckerhoff International, have signed yesterday, 26.10.04, on an agreement, according to which, P.B.I. will provide the railways with control and inspection services on railway projects.

The contract was signed by the Transport Ministry's General Manager, Ing. Ben-Zion Salman, the Finance Ministry's Accountant-General Mr. Yaron Zalikh, and by the Vice President of P.B.I. Mr. Michael Schneider.

The railways' investments plan for the next five years (2004 to 2008) is around \$4.44 billion, and includes building of dozens of new lines all over Israel, as well as purchasing rolling stock at more than \$1 billion.

The Transport Minister Mr. Shitrit, said in the ceremony, that P.B.I. will assist the Ministries of Transport and Finance in inspection of the implementation of the investments program during the next three years.

The inspection works will include surveying and checking of the projects' design stages, the estimated costs of each project planned by the railways, inspection of schedules, and checking the procedures of the tenders published by the railways.

The control services will include - among others - keeping to standards and checking the costs of purchasing rolling stock, follow-up on the electrification project, and checking Q/A procedures and the approvals given to each railways' track project.

Mr. Shitrit mentioned that at present fifteen main railway projects are being implemented, among which are:

- Ben-Gurion Airport-Modi'in line at a cost of \$333 million;
- a 3rd track on the Ayalon line at a cost of \$62.2 million;
- upgrading the old line to Jerusalem (from Beit-Shemesh) at a cost of \$106.7 million;
- upgrading the Beer-Sheva - Dimona line at a cost of \$37.8 million,
- and upgrading and double-tracking the Ashdod - Ashkelon line at a cost of \$47.8 million.

(h). BEN GURION AIRPORT LINE OPENS.

The train service to Ben-Gurion

International Airport began as scheduled on 10/10/04. First arrival was the 0202 from Nahariyya (0340 into B-G). One or two crazies (not me, says Paul) actually travelled on it, so you might get impressions from one of them. Photos of line can be seen at <railnewsil.com>

The airport link was officially opened on 21.10.04 with the participation of the Finance Minister Mr. Netanyahu (for how long?), and the Transport Minister Mr. Shitrit (for how long? He may soon become the Finance Minister!).

From a press release of 26.09.04 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

Briefing the press, the General Manager Mr. Yossi Mor, said:

"The opening of the rail link to Ben-Gurion International Airport on 10.10.04, is another proof of the growth and development of the railways, which will thus join the "club" of the railway networks around the world already enjoying such services."

The rail link (which already opened on 10.10.04 as planned), is an intercity line, linking the airport with Tel-Aviv, Haifa, and Nahariya; it cost \$82.44 million (of which \$9.1 million was the share of the Airports Authority); it is served by 32 trains/day each direction; the first train leaves Nahariya at the North on 02:02 a.m. and arrives at the airport on 03:40 a.m., giving an average speed of about 92 km/h for a distance of 150 km and includes 8 intermediate stations.

The airport station is located adjacent to the new Terminal 3, thus giving the rail passengers a direct access; until the opening of the terminal on 02.11.04, shuttle services (buses) will be given free of charge, between the existing old terminal and the station, in timetables coordinated with the railways.

The line serves, in addition to the air passengers, also thousands of workers of the new airport itself, as well as those working in the nearby industry, and the residential areas of Modi'in, Shoham, the Lod valley, etc., who have the parking facilities at the airport; until 02.11.04 free of charge, then at a symbolic price of \$2.70 daily.

Mr. Mor added: "The line is one of the railways' most important projects, both at a local and international level; it will enable people to reach the terminal from many destinations in a short time and with great efficiency. [he actually said that it will be reachable from all over Israel, but unfortunately, the airport line is currently linked directly only to Tel-Aviv, Haifa, and Nahariya]

A.G.]; the monthly traffic forecast is for 100,000."

From a press release of 01.10.04 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

A survey made by the "Panorama Markets" survey institute reveals that 45% of air passengers going abroad will choose rail, and 40% of the returning passengers will do the same. Most of the people questioned mentioned the following reasons in favour of rail: The main reason-fast arrival (no bottle-necks); the second reason-comfort of travel; third price (it is cheaper by train). An important point: the tendency to use rail characterizes all ages, both car owners, and people without cars; also, the stated intention to use rail applies to both business flights and tourism flights. It costs \$2.70 to travel from the Airport to Tel-Aviv; by taxi the tariff is \$20, which means that even when shared by 4 persons (a family for example), it is still 46% cheaper by train, though that still does not include public transport expenses to and from the train.

(i). MODI'IN BUS LINK.

An interesting initiative by one of the members of the Modi'in municipality, Mr. Amnon Merhav, is now being examined by the Transport Ministry; He has asked Israel Railways, the Ministry, and the local bus operator Margalit, to introduce a shuttle bus service at a symbolic fare between the city and the airport station and back, during the day, and particularly in mornings and evenings, until the opening of the rail link between the airport and Modi'in sometime in 2006.

The Railways' spokesman Mr. Benny Naor meanwhile told the Press that they were offering the same idea, and that such a service will start soon.

(j). MODI'IN RAIL LINK HELD UP.

The works on the line between the airport and Modi'in, are almost on hold, due to an appeal of the Greens to the court, against the railways, who - they claim - created huge heaps of earth from the excavation works along the line, thus causing severe damage to the environment; they added that they want to avoid repetition of the damage caused during upgrading works on the old line to Jerusalem; This may affect also the rate of works on the fast link to Jerusalem, which is anyhow stuck in the Supreme Court due to an appeal by Palestinians.

(k). NEW SEASON TICKETS.

On the same day of the actual opening of the airport link, the railways

introduced the "Monthly Free" ("Chodschi Hofsch") ticket on all lines from all stations, extending the former arrangement which enabled this service on five suburban lines only; The fare reduction has been increased from 25% to 35%; In addition, the railways introduces the "Weekly Free" ticket on all lines on the same principle as that of the "Monthly Free"; the tariff of the "Weekly Free" is equal to 7.5 single journeys on the same line.

Both sorts of tickets are the initiatives of the energetic Transport Minister Mr. Meir Shitrit, who said: "We've to do everything to encourage use of all modes of public transport."

(l). HAIFA EAST STATION REBUILDING.

From Paul:- "In mid-August 2004 work began on re-roofing the main building of Haifa East station (see 61:1 for part view or Plate 109 in "The Railways of Palestine and Israel" for full view). The previous asbestos sheeting and wooden joists were removed to be replaced with red tiles and steel joists. The roof profile has been altered slightly by raising to give a three-level profile in place of the four levels which presumably dated from the rebuilding following the sabotage of September 1946 when part of the building was destroyed by explosives. The results are most pleasing and dignified, and more in line (as far as possible) with how the station originally looked; though the present-day profusion of external air-conditioning units sadly detracts from the facade. The work was completed towards the end of October and, whether by design or good fortune, coincides closely with the centenary of the station. Planned for 2005 is a similar re-roofing of the large two-storey stone building on the opposite side of the tracks, adjacent to the large exhibits hall of the museum (formerly the HR loco shed). Believed built in WW1, this building houses, among other departments of IR, the offices and archives of the museum, and is seen in the background of the upper photo in 52:8a."

(m). TOP'N'TAIL WORKINGS.

As reported in 64:4:(o) the top 'n' tail formations on the Kiryat Motzkin - Hof Carmel suburban trains were withdrawn with the summer timetable in June. These formations were again noted on a couple of occasions immediately after this date, presumably as the new timetable was settling down since they disappeared thereafter in favour of suburban trains made up of IC3 or Double-Deck vehicles. Then, on

24/10/04, a top & tail consist suddenly reappeared. It was made up of two G12s, four of the second hand ex-SNCF coaches, and a generator coach. This was a Sunday, traditionally a problem day on IR, so it was likely the top & tail formation had been called out at short notice to deputise for the failure of something else. The true story is different, but similar - it is a regular working still, but Sundays Only - i.e. when the strain on the IR fleet is at its peak.

(n). AKKO SUBWAY HOLD-UP. RABBI ROTHSCHILD TO BLAME.....

On Thursday 28./10/2004 the 'IRAC' e-mail news service reported:- "Sharon Instructs Shitrit to Halt Excavations in Acco. By B. Kahn and Y. Ariel. Following public outrage over the desecration of ancient Jewish graves in Acco Prime Minister Ariel Sharon instructed Transportation Minister Meir Shitrit to halt excavation work at the site. As a result it was decided to postpone the mass demonstration originally scheduled to take place in Jerusalem last Thursday. Dozens of activists converged on Acco early last week to protest the unearthing of bodily remains by the Antiquities Authority in order to dig a tunnel for a road under train tracks. Numerous arrests were made and fourteen of the protesters spent several days in jail.

Degel HaTorah Chairman MK Rabbi Avrohom Ravitz and Degel HaTorah Secretary MK Rabbi Moshe Gafni applied heavy pressure on the Prime Minister's Office and the Transportation Minister to cease excavation work immediately.

Following a conversation with Rabbis Ravitz and Gafni, Government Secretary Attorney Yisrael Maimon and Minister Shitrit met with PM Sharon, who instructed the Transportation Minister to halt the excavation work and to engage in dialogue with representatives from the Association for the Prevention of Grave Desecration.

Shortly thereafter Shitrit called HaRav Michah Rothschild, one of the heads of the Association for the Prevention of Grave Desecration, to notify him of the decision and to arrange a meeting to solve the problem. Until then the foundation work at the site has stopped completely."

(o). BEER SHEBA CENTRAL STATION.

At the end of October work began on building two extra tracks and another platform at Beersheba Central station. This expansion had been

planned for when the station was originally built, so the new construction is expected to proceed smoothly and quickly.

(p). MORE ON BINYAMINA QUARRY SIDING.

The Binyamina quarry siding has been out of use since the beginning of 2003. Apparently the type of stone now quarried there is unsuitable for former customers served by IR. The track to the quarry remains in situ (8/2004) but it is likely that the siding will be officially closed in the near future. A number of ballast wagons used for the quarry traffic still stand on track 4 at Zikhron Ya'akov station.

(q). LINE TO GAZA?

From the Jerusalem Post, 20.10.2004. "TRAIN MAY CONNECT GAZA TO ASHDOD". by Dan Gerstenfeld.

"The government is considering linking the Gaza Strip to the Israeli railroad system as part of the disengagement plan, Itamar Ya'ar, deputy head of the National Security Council, said on Tuesday.

Speaking at conference on Palestinian-Israeli economic relations in crisis at the Tel Aviv University, Yaar said Israel also plans to transfer infrastructure and business facilities in Gush Katif to the Palestinians. According to Yaar, there are talks about laying railroad lines that will connect the Ashdod Port directly to Gaza, make it easier for Palestinians to bring goods and products into the Gaza Strip. Ya'ar told 'The Jerusalem Post' the current railroad ends 3.5 kilometers from Gaza. For only NIS 30 million, the rail could be extended till Gaza, he said. Israel hopes that the project, as well as other economic initiatives, will be funded by donor countries and the World Bank.

According to Ya'ar, it currently takes as long as three weeks to transfer products from Israel into Gaza. "A container going to Gaza which arrives at the Ashdod Port goes through security checks in Ashdod and is loaded on a truck, which must be examined again in Karni," Ya'ar said. "If we extend the railroad it could go directly to Gaza and reduce costs."

(r). JERUSALEM LINE PROGRESS.

Sybil Ehrlich writes:-"Attached are photos taken at Bar Giora on 24.11.04 and near Malcha in Jerusalem today, 28.11.04. Track has reached about a kilometre east of the Refaim road bridge (altogether about 3 km.

east of Bar Giora station). I saw two works trains, loco 116 with high-sided wagons (any idea what might be in them? I forgot to ask the train driver. It isn't likely to be ballast because this train was west of 117 with flat wagons and lengths of track.) I continued walking from end of track for about another kilometre on the trackbed, and then took a path to Moshav Aminadav, on the southwestern edge of Jerusalem. I could see ballast on the trackbed all the way.

Today I was in the area of the zoo. Workmen are there with bulldozers. I was told that ballast is completed all the way from Bar Giora to the station at Malcha, except for this short stretch where they are building a platform for Zoo station, a bit east of the old Zoo station. As you can see, signals are already in place at km. 80.4!

Track laying is progressing at 324 metres a day, and is therefore scheduled to reach the area of the zoo around the second week of January."

(s). MORE ON SWEDISH IC3 IMPORTS.

(See 66:5:a). An item in 'Lok Magazin' 11/2004 p.31 confirms that IR is acquiring ten units of Swedish class Y2/Y2K from Belkingetrafiken and Skanetrafiiken, Nos. 1369, 1372, 2373, 1374, 1375, 1376, 1377, 1378, 1385 and 1386. These are identical to the Danish IC3 sets, of which 41 units are already in use on IR [making Israel, incidentally, the major export market for these units! Ed.] Following a thorough modernisation at Randers in Denmark - the works to include beefing up the air-conditioning, replacing 1st. Class with Standard - they will be shipped to Israel from December 2004 till Dec. 2005. They will be needed, notes the article, for use on the reopened Jerusalem line. The trains have become available owing to the further electrification of the Kristianstad - Hässleholm - Helsingborg route from 2005.

67:5. TENDERS.

(i). MC/KB/02/04. Supply and Installation of an overhead 20+5 lifting capacity Crane.

The installation includes beams and rails for the crane movements; the railways reserve themselves the right to order an additional crane within 24 months of installing the 1st crane. Time of implementation: 1 month. Latest bidding date: 21.09.2004.

(ii). BN/KB/26/04. Cleaning out Drainage Channels throughout the system.

The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of an additional 12 months. Bids by 27.09.2004.

(iii). HN/KB/31/04. Building a Footbridge at Ben-Zachai Village (on the line to Ashkelon.) Works to include: Earthworks, cast concrete, electricity, etc. Time for implementation: 6 months. Bids by 28.09.2004.

(iv). MC/KB/03/04. Upgrading the Electricity System at Haifa Kishon Works.

To include: Electrical installation, supply, channelling and ladders for cables etc. Time for Implementation: 2 months. Bids by 11.10.2004.

(v). BN/MT/26/04. Measuring and Surveying Services. (Inspection of Subcontractors.) On Tel Aviv - Rishon leZion West line. The contract will be valid from the date of signing until service completion.

(vi). MC/MT/06/04. RFI. (Request for Information). For inspection of Design. Manufacturing and acceptance tests for container flat cars to be built in Israel. Bids by 20.10.2004.

(vii). MC/KB/04/04. Manufacture and supply of luggage racks for railway coaches and dmsu.

The railways keep themselves the option for additional 100% of the original quantity within 24 months from beginning of work. Latest bidding date: 01.11.2004.

(viii). HN/KB/09/04. Infrastructure works of upgrading and double-tracking the Naan-Beer-Sheva line section 6; from km 67.800 to km 71.200; from km 0.850 to km 4.575; and from km 73.300 to km 74.019.

Works include the following structures:

Structure 01 - Infrastructure works.

Structure 02 to 09 - various railway bridges.

Structure 10 - Option - A railway bridge at km 68.150.

Structure 11 - Water, sewage, and irrigation installations.

Structure 12 - Security rooms (relate to all mentioned structures).

Structure 13 - Option - Laying monobloc type concrete sleepers and rails along the alignment.

Time of implementation: 6 months; Latest bidding date: 17.11.2004.

(ix). HN/KB/35/04. Upgrading and double-tracking works on the Ashkelon- Yad-Mordekhai line.

Works include: earthworks, concrete, sealing, piles, infrastructure for signalling and communication cables, etc. Time of implementation: 6 months. Latest bidding date: 18.11.2004.

(x). BN/KB/27/04. A frame agreement for cutting weed along the railway lines and at the railways' installations.

The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 08.11.2004.

(xi). NO/SR/09/04. Gardening services at railway stations and all over the Network.

The tender refers to 2 areas: the central-south area from the station of Kfar-Sava to the station of Dimona, and the northern area from the station of Nahariyya to the station of Tel-Aviv; each bidder has the right to bid for the combined area or each of the two separately.

The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 22.11.2004.

(xii). HN/KB/38/04. IMPOR-TANT! - The Valley line (Hedjaz) section 1 between Paz (Shell) bridge, Lev-Ha-Mifratz station, Hahistadrut (Unions) Avenue, and Nesher.

Time of implementation: 10 months. Latest bidding date: 29.11.04.

[Note: this is the 1st stage of revival the famous Hedjaz line, which will eventually connect Haifa and Amman.]

(xiii). TN/RS/09/04. Issuing, Manufacturing, and Supply of Time-tables;

An annual contract with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest bidding date: 01.12.04.

(xiv). HD/RC/01/04. For the Supply and Installation of a Driving Simulator for IR - a turnkey project for the manufacture, supply, installation,

assembly, technical support and maintenance of a new driving simulator, able to represent a JT42BW or JT42CW diesel-electric locomotive with all equipment for the functioning of such driving simulator.... Bids by 2 25.01.2005..

(xv). BT/RC/01/04. For the Manufacture and Supply of Track Motor Car with Crane ('Tender')

The supply of one track motor car with crane, plus an option, at ISR's sole discretion, for the supply of similar track cars during a period of ten years com-

mencing on the date of signature of the agreement. Bids by 30.11.2004.

(xvi). HN/RC/01/04. Manufacture and Supply of Buffer Stops.

For a period of three years. Bids by 20.12.2004.

(xvii). HN/RC/02/04. For Manufacture and Supply of Various Types of Bolts for Rail Tracks.

Crapo Bolts and Screwspikes No. 2. For a period of four years, bids by 12.12.2004.

(xviii). MC/KB/05/04. Upgrading the electricity system at the Loco Depot at Dimona.

Time of implementation: 2 months; Latest bidding date: 02.12.2004.

(xix). TK/RC/01/04. Supply of Electronic Signalling System for IR.

For manufacture, supply, warranty and maintenance of an electronic signalling system for a period of 5 years, plus an option (at IR's sole discretion) for the supply of additional electronic signalling for an additional period of 5 years. Bids by 27.01.2005.

(xx). Tender TK/KB/04/04. Laying main communication cables along the Ben-Gurion International Airport-Modi'in line (now in construction).

Works include: supply of various types of cable; uncovering, opening and closing of existing concrete channels as well as new (to be carried out within other projects); laying main cables (copper and optical) into concrete channels; supply of sub-assemblies and connecting the cables; installation and connecting of pedestals, supply and installation of end boxes and krone blocks; and final checks of cable relays. Time of implementation: 10 months. Latest bidding date: 07.12.2004.

(xxi). Tender BN/MT/27/04. Measuring services (inspection on sub-contractors) on the Kiryat-Motzkin-Nahariya line.

The contract is for 60 months with an option for extending it by additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 19.12.2004.

(xxii). MC/RC/04/04. Manufacture and Supply of Various Types of Monobloc Wheels.

Quantity unlimited. For a period of three years, bids by 11.01.2005.

67:6. LIGHT RAIL NEWS.

(a). TEL AVIV.

(i). KUTCHIK LEAVES.

(From a press release of 27.08.2004 by NTA-The Tel-Aviv Metro project management:)

"The Chairman of NTA's Directorate Mr. Yossi Kutchick, will soon leave his post at his own request; the reason being that he has too many commitments; He is the Chairman of Manpower, the President of the consulting company POC, and the owner of the consulting company Kutchick Initiatives Management and Consulting Ltd. He has been in his job under three Transport Ministers: Zakhi Hanegbi, Avigdor Liebermann, and the present Meir Shitreet. He has been appreciated by all the people working with him, and the most important steps regarding the promotion of the Tel-Aviv LRV project took place during this period. All wish him success in his future!"

(ii). PAYMENT CHANGES.

(From a Press Release of 15.09.21004 by NTA.)

"The Chairman of the Inter-Ministrial Committee, Mr. Zvi Halamish, has briefed the press that the rules for receiving the construction grant for the Tel Aviv Metro/LRTV have been changed.- 'The winning competitor will receive 75% of the sum already during the construction works, unlike the original plan under which he was to receive 53% only. Also, the first payment will be made within 24 months of work starting, as opposed to the original 36 months. The milestones (intermediate payments) will be made quarterly and not annually as originally planned.'

NTA's General Manager, Mr. Yishai Dotan, explained that 'the change of rules is a result of an open and constant dialogue between the tenders Committee and the competitors'. He added that it reduces the financial exposure of both the competitors and the financiers, while increasing the number of milestones enables the concessionaire to obtain smaller loans for shorter terms, thus making the financial closure easier and significantly shorter."

(iii). VISIT BY TRANSPORT MINISTER. Aharon Gazit writes:

"On 14.10.04, the Transport Minister Mr. Shitrit [or Shitreet. Ed.], visited the works being carried out along the alignment of the 1st line (the Red Line) at Bat-Yam and Jaffa together with NTA's General Manager Mr. Yishai Dotan and members of the Ministry and NTA (I also took part in the visit); the following press release of NTA dated 29.10.04 describes his visit:

"At last, the citizens of the Greater Tel-Aviv Area will feel a double relief- relief from bottlenecks and a reduction of air pollution" said the Mr. Shitrit during his visit. NTA's General Manager Mr. Yishai Dotan, showed the visitor the works of moving existing infrastructures at the two mentioned sites, to make place for the LRV infrastructure.

Mr. Shitrit added, that, "the urban rail network to be built, which combines surface and underground rail traffic, will enable us to limit the entrances of private cars to the Israeli most congested metropolitan area, thus joining the advanced cities of the world; he himself, upon arrival at London or Paris, uses LRV (he probably meant Metro; LRV services in this two cities are very limited), since it saves time and enables reaching everywhere fast and punctual".

On being asked if there any budget problems which may cause delays in the project's schedule, he clarified that "there is no budget problem, and as far as the Ministry is concerned, there is full support, and it is considered as a top priority project".

Mr. Dotan said that the works being carried out nowadays simultaneously at Bat-Yam, Jaffa, and Petakh-Tikva, and soon to start also at Ramat-Gan and Bnei-Brak, will cost \$156 million.

(iv). NEW CHAIRMAN - BRIG. NEVO.

Mr. Shitrit has recently appointed Mr. Azriel Nevo (Brigadier-General in Reserve) as Chairman of NTA succeeding Mr. Yossi Kutchick who left the job several months ago, due to being too busy in his other business interests. Mr. Nevo was the military secretary of the Prime Ministers: Begin, Shamir, Yitzhak Rabin, and Shimon Peres.

Mr. Shitrit used the opportunity to instruct Mr. Dotan to start planning immediately all the NTA's lines, this being against the project's management policy to concentrate first of all in building and operating the Red Line; Shitrit's reason is the urgent need to reduce congestion and air pollution.

(v). GEOLOGICAL TESTS.

Ten engineers, and geologists, tunnels specialists of one of the world's biggest infrastructures companies, the Chinese CCECC, have arrived to Israel in the last week to check the soil, water levels, and building structures along the alignment of the planned tunnelled section, in particular near the coast at the point where Tel-Aviv and Jaffa meet,

where the buildings are extremely old; they will carry out some excavations for soil samples; at a later stage a second specialist delegation of constructors will arrive. CCECC is a partner in the consortium created together with Siemens, Egged, and Africa-Israel.

(vi). TRANSPORT MINISTER'S PRESS INTERVIEW.

On 19.10.04, Mr. Shitrit gave an interview to the most popular newspaper in Israel - 'Yediot Aharonot' (latest news); I think it is worth quoting the main points of his opinions and visions:

He believes in giving budgetary top priorities to transportation infrastructures in order to bring the peripheries closer to the center; If people can work at a travelling distance of 30 minutes from home, they will not need to live at the centre; He personally is even more extreme, and if he could, he would have legislate a law to forbid building of any new town in the central region in favor of building it in the south!

Therefore, the line to Eilat is a top priority; it will be an excellent alternative to the already over-congested Suez Channel, as well as forming a fast and convenient passenger link with central and north Israel; he believes that it will open in 2009, and the citizens of this town will then be free of VAT!

He claims that the Transport Ministry, which from its nature should be a professional one, is suffering from ministers who are only a very short time in their job; during 56 years of the State of Israel, there were 26 Ministers, while during the last 15 years alone, there have been 20 ministers!

This is not a normal situation, and even when a Minister wants to have some influence, he just does not get a chance! The results can clearly be seen: In only the last decade, there is a deficit of \$4.9 billion in investments, while speaking about the last two decades, the investments deficit is of \$13.3 billion compared with western developed countries!

Regarding LRV projects; he wants every year to build a new line in Tel-Aviv until 2011; he said that 30 years have been wasted on the silly question of whether an LRV or a metro is needed for Tel-Aviv; by that time, the whole network could have been operational at 10% of the costs!

As already mentioned, the works in Jerusalem should start in 2005; in order to create a single ticket for all the transport modes, Metropolitan Transport Authorities will be created, the first in Jerusalem, the second in Tel-Aviv, and

later on in other cities.

Regarding the fast link to Jerusalem, Mr. Shitrit seems to be a real fighter; He asked the Supreme Court, why it is that two main roads Nos. 1 and 443 (to Jerusalem and Modi'in respectively), which also pass through pre-05.06.1967 areas, are OK, while a railway line which is supposed to pass not far from Road No. 1 is not OK?

When he was answered that the roads already exist, he rejected it bravely, claiming that roads can also be changed, but probably they have a better lobby, so now he is acting as the Railways' lobby! He believes that by 2009 the line will open; he also said that the upgraded old line to Jerusalem will be opened at the first quarter of 2005.

Finally, on being asked why he is prepared to invest in losing money passenger railway lines rather than in roads with a high rate of return, he answered, that almost all over the world passenger services are money losers, but all the developed countries are developing their railways because they are a very efficient and non-polluting transport mode; he mentioned the electrification programme, and added that he is not worried about the subsidy given to the railways, claiming that the benefits to the economy and society are much higher than the operational subsidy.

(vii). BID COSTS REIMBURSED.

From a Press Release of 15.11.2004, by NTA.

The Chairman of the Tel Aviv LRV Tenders Committee, accountant Hagai Miller, (who is also a senior deputy accountant at the Finance Ministry) has told the press that the committee has decided to return the costs of preparing the tender some \$1.5M - back to the competing group which reached 2nd. place for the Red Line B.O.T. bid. This sum is smaller than the overall estimated cost of preparing the tender.

The committee also decided that the return of such costs would become a fixed element, in order to ensure that competitors will continue to invest in preparing a tender, without being worried at the financial loss should the project be cancelled, and to indicate the State's full support for any project.

The Finance Ministry's Accountant-General, Dr. Yaron Zalikhha, emphasised that this initial decision has been taken to increase competition up to the last stages of the tender, as well as securing a second quotation for the State, in case the winner cannot keep to his commitment. In this event, the

second-placed bidder will be able to step in at the price originally bid. By this means the winning bidder will not be able to hold the State to ransom when - as has happened - proving incapable of carrying out the required works and not fulfilling commitments.

Mr. Miller said that the return of such preparation costs is accepted in other projects, but this is the first time it is being implemented here; the reason being the size, complexity and the tendering costs involved. He added that the decision's intention is to increase competition in major government infrastructure projects; intensive dialogue has taken place with the competing groups.

NTA's General Manager, Mr. Yishai Dotan, added that during the discussions, the competitors had the opportunity to raise all possible questions. More than a thousand were submitted, most have been answered and the rest will be answered soon.

The competing groups are:-

- MTS (Metro Transportation Solution) comprising Siemens, HTM of the Netherlands, CCECC of China, SOARASDA COSTA of Portugal, Africa-Israel and Egged.

- Metro-Rail (formerly Ashtram), comprising Connex, CGEA, Alstene Zublin of Germany, Ashtram, and Shikun-U-Binui.

- Speedan, comprising BVG of Germany, Ansaldo of Italy, Pantehniki of Greece, Trena of Greece, Shafir Engineering, Milomor, Aviv and Dan.

(b). JERUSALEM.

(i). FINANCE. From a Press Release of 22.09.04 by the project management:

After long discussions between the Finance Ministry's Accountant-General Dr. Yaron Zalikhha, and his Deputy Accountant-General Mr. Tzvi Khamlish, and the members of the City-Pass group - the concessionaire (including seniors of Alstom France, which came here specially for the negotiations), as well as the financing banks, the Document of Understanding and associated agreements for the problems which until now were the obstacle to closing the financial aspects, has been signed, thus enabling the City-Pass specialists and the projects managers to start the detailed design of the first line, as well as issuing the permits for construction in mid-October 2004; the Project Manager, Mr. Samuel Tzabary, believes that track laying and construction of the associated systems will start already by April 2004.

The background to the delays in

completing the financial aspects is the requirement of the financial system to make the contract more suitable to the area conditions, namely the continuing Palestinian resistance (Intifada), and its possible effect on the foreseen demands, while the concessionaire requested various changes to the conditions of the contract he signed; according to the policy of Dr. Zalikha, the state refused to improve the concessionaire's conditions and insisted on the point that the concessionaire will strictly keep to all his commitments even in cases of continuing resistance.

Concretely, it was agreed that in case of a drastic decline in demands, the state will partially protect the concessionaire, and in return the state will receive 33% of additional profits compared with 25% in the original concession; it was also mutually agreed to extend by several months the project's schedules in case that one of the sides may suffer from a delay in receiving the permits for works to be carried out at the areas under his responsibility; Both sides also clarified the legal sides of the cases in which one of the sides may cancel the concession.

Dr. Zalikha emphasized the fact the agreement shows that, as such, it is not a recommendation, but a financial contract to be strictly kept, and that the steps taken are the only guarantee to efficiency in governmental tenders.

It will take 36 months to build the first line at a cost of \$422 million, of which the state's share as a grant is \$311 million.

As for the people of Jerusalem, they will see within few months the beginning of works to be carried out by the private sector; this has been enabled thanks to the works changing infrastructures which have taken place during the last 2 years, thus paving the way for the "real big works".

(ii). EGGED.

Senior persons of the Egged Buses Company have recently told the Press that they will continue with all the preparations to enter into a 25% partnership in the Jerusalem LRV project - the same as they have done in the Tel-Aviv LRV project, where their partnership has been approved by the government. They were responding to a statement given by Mr. Dror Strom, responsible for business monopoly restrictions in the Finance Ministry, according to which the aim of the project is to create competition in public transport and not to enable Egged to take over the whole Jerusalem transport; Egged leaders further clarified that their intention is to start the partnership at 5% with an option to increase it up to 25%; Egged is negotiating with Connex, which is part of the concessionaire City-Pass Group.

67:6.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). JERUSALEM LINE CLOSURE. (from Paul Cotterell).

Some time ago I was told the Real Reason for the spate of derailments on the Jerusalem line in 1998 which led to its closure: This information coming from the former operator of a Matisa tamping machine who is now retired. According to him, it was the introduction of the new Plasser tamper on the Jerusalem branch which caused the problems. The tamping action of the Plasser lifted the steel sleepers from the ballast. The sleepers were of concave section. The Plasser failed to properly re-pack the ballast beneath them so that they now tended to move under the passage of trains, eventually causing derailments. The Matisa operator could see what was happening and pointed out the likely consequences to his supervisor on the spot, who ridiculed the warning and ordered the work to continue. After the first derailment the Plasser was sent up again to realign the track but only exacerbated the situation further, leading to more derailments and closure of the line.

(b). IRANIAN 2-10-2's.

Phil Atkins of the National Railway Museum in York writes with a query: "I was wondering if any of your subscribers had any information on the fate of the handsome 2-10-2s built by the Vulcan Foundry for Iran ca.1952.

Originally 24 were ordered from Beyer Peacock in 1940, who variously schemed them as 2-10-2s and 4-10-0s with two and three cylinders. The order was deferred owing to WW2 and then placed with Vulcan ca.1950 and increased to 64 engines. Delivery from 1952 was disrupted by the Anglo-Iranian diplo-

matic crisis, but when they finally arrived they had a very short life for only 3 were regarded as servicable by early 1961. It would also be interesting to know what became of the four 4-8-2 + 2-8-4 Garratts built pre-war for Iran."

Any information received will be passed on.

(c). Re. 66:8.(c). P.R. CRANE BOILERS.

From Chen Melling: "There has been a slight misunderstanding regarding the drawings mentioned by Paul from the PR Chief Mechanical Engineer collection. These are part of a series dealing specifically with vertical boilers operated and owned by PR, including (but not limited to) those used on railway cranes. These boilers were numbered in their own number series by PR, and thus PR boilers nos. 60 and 61 are (according to the drawing mentioned) the boilers fitted to the two 25T cranes used by PR, which are Cowans Sheldon Nos. 3855 and 3856. That is, CS used Spencer Hopwood boilers on both cranes, though I cannot say for certain whether these were the original boilers or replacement ones. Therefore, there is no conflict between the two stamps on the drawing."

(d). Re. 66:11(j). – BOMBARDIER LRV's

Also from Chen: "The current family brand name for Bombardier trams (LRV's) is 'Flexity' and not 'Flexibility'. The 'Outlook' sub-brand of the family represents Bombardier's range of 100% low-floor trams. Pictures and technical details and drawings of both Eskisehir trams and Istanbul's 'Flexity Swift' trams (built for use with station platforms) are available on Bombardier Transportation's web site:

www.transportation.bombardier.com "

(e). Re: 66:16:(c). JERUSALEM LINE. The first regular IR passenger train to arrive at Jerusalem in March 1950 was hauled by Baldwin No. 894.

(f). Re 66:8:(k). AL-BASHATWA.

From Uri Yinon. "Al-Bashatwa (this is the full name) was a medium sized Arab village, not far from the town of Beit Shean. During the war of 1948 it was totally destroyed. Next to it was a landing strip, used by the fledgling Israeli Air Force."

Sybil Ehrlich has also found it mentioned on an old map.

(g). BEERSHEBA OLD STATION.

In 63:9:f reference was made to the engine shed at the Turkish station

at Beersheba being blown down in a storm, and it was noted that "damage was also done to C.I. rest room and stores attached". The Editor wondered if the letters C.I. might mean Chief Inspector, but I feel sure they stand for Corrugated Iron! If so, it must have been an intolerably hot and sweaty rest room. Incidentally, Corrugated Iron also appears to be mentioned in 63:10, only this time it is referred to as "CGI sheets".

(h). TWO SCOTTISH NAMEPLATES.

While on a recent tour of Qishon Works I noticed something I'd overlooked for decades. In the derelict foundry at the top end of the north yard a rusty overhead crane is still in situ. This carries a large and handsome nameplate bearing the legend:

*SIR WILLIAM ARROL & Co Ltd
GLASGOW, SCOTLAND.
ORDER No 2086 1923
MAXIMUM LOAD 5 TONS
HOISTING 20 FEET PER MINUTE
TRAVERSING 100 FEET PER
MINUTE
TRAVELLING 300 FEET PER
MINUTE*

Incidentally, there is already a nameplate from this manufacturer exhibited in the IRM. This preserved example came from what I presume to have been the original traverser in the north yard at Qishon Works, and there is a photograph (dating from the '60s or '70s) showing it when still attached to that traverser. This plate is smaller and carries the wording:

*SIR WILLIAM ARROL & Co Ltd
PARKHEAD GLASGOW
ORDER 2087 LOAD 100 TONS
1923*

It will be noted that these plates were built to concurrent order numbers and both date from 1923, which raises a query. This date seems too late for Kantara East Workshops and too early for Qishon Works.

(i). SOME 'INNOTRANS' NOTES.

For the record - at this week-long Industrial Fair devoted to Transport, held in Berlin, the Editor spent a day plodding past some of the hundreds of stands of firms displaying railway-related technological services or products. There was little of direct relevance to Israel or the Near East, but a lot of indirect material. For example, a brochure on double-deck coaches from Bombardier included a photo of a set on IR. Aharon Gazit was in attendance, as well as Richard Sarfati of KGM Group, Tel Aviv, and a small delegation from IR.

Several Turkish firms were in attendance - Kencart of Izmir, which makes automatic fare collection systems; DMS which renews and refurbishes passenger coaches, TÜVASAS, the Turkish Wagon Industry Co., Yavuzlar Group 1982 (coach repair and refurbishment), and V.I.G. Machinery (Paint systems).

The Tüvasas brochure informs us that the Repair Factory was established in 1951, at Adapazari, and was reorganised with its current name in 1986, as a joint company with TCDD. Modern management and the introduction of its own R&D Department have improved output; It has produced many vehicles of the TVS-2000 Series, (with Y-32 bogies for 160 kph top speed) including 'Pullman Vagon' (Pullman Coach - open saloon with 2+1 seating, 60 seats), Yemekli Vagon (Restaurant Car - 14 tables, seating 55), Yataklı Vagon (Sleeping Car - 10 two-bed compartments plus crew compartment), Kusetli Vagon (Couchette - 10 four-bed compartments plus crew compartment), Kompartmanlı Vagon (Compartment coach, 11 6-seat compartments), Jeneratörlü Vagon (Generator Coach), and bogies. The factory comprises 76,268 sq. m. under cover and a further 750,000 sq. m. uncovered.

It produced its first coach in 1962, for PTT General Management; in 1971 narrow-gauge bogie coaches were built and exported to Bangladesh; from 1975 coaches were built to UIC-RIC standards; in 1979 Electric Multiple Units were built for TCDD under an Alstom license; in 2000 tramway vehicles were built for the Bursa Light Rail line.

Much of the work still involves refurbishment of older coaches; these are stripped down and then reconstructed using modern modular equipment units on the old framework, thus enabling a degree of standardisation and assistance with maintenance, all at a lower cost than new construction. The M10 series Pullman coaches have been so refurbished, with Schlieren bogies for 140kph. A Saloon with positions for Disabled Passengers has 39 seats, suitable toilets, two sliding doors and 'lifts' for wheelchairs.

There is also a 'Sakarya Ray Otobüsü' - a bogie diesel railcar with capacity for 64 sitting and 40 standing passengers, max. speed 140 kph., and a planned three-car dmu ('Dizel Tren Set'), with Diesel-Hydraulic transmission, max. speed 160 kph, seating 160 in total.

The Yavuzlar Group brochure is printed in an idiosyncratic English

(though much better than my Turkish! But one still wonders why these firms don't get a native English speaker to glance over the drafts before producing glossy and expensive brochures.) After some work at translation and deciphering, one learns that the firm was established in 1982, and currently operates at 8 sites, especially Adapazari and Eskisehir, designing and manufacturing Pullman, Restaurant, Compartment, Sleeping and 'Furgon' cars (i.e. baggage/parcels vehicles) for TCDD - 45 coaches and 20 e.m.u. vehicles per year - employing 250 persons, using 15,000 sq. m. covered and 10,000 sq. m. open space, and also modernising and refurbishing passenger and freight vehicles. The head office is at 4 Sokak, 6 Balgat-Ankara, and there is a website at <www.yavuzlargrup.com> .

VIG have a factory at Kocaeli, head office in Istanbul, and a website at <www.vigmakina.com> .

Yapicilar (<www.yapicilar.com.tr>) of Ankara make moulded fibreglass and steel parts for railway coaches.

The Spanish firm 'Albatros' also notes in its brochure that it has done business in Israel.

The brochure of the firm "Weidmueller" (<www.weidmueller.com>) which produces components for electrical connections indicates that its products have been sold, inter alia, in Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, the UAE and Yemen - though clearly not all these can have been for railway applications.

Arthur Flury AG of Deitingen, Switzerland (<www.aflury.cg>) makes copper and stainless steel components for overhead electric catenary; the brochure indicates their product is also used in Turkey.

Mecano Exportimport SA of Bucharest, Romania, has not so much a brochure as a 68-page book which lists almost every export success over many years! It was established as a State agency to handle foreign exports for various enterprises, and after 1989 became a privatised Joint-Stock company. Relevant to 'Harakevet' are the following entries in a Table of "bogies, wheelsets, solid wheels and axles":-

Egypt:- Semifinished wheels to UIC standards: 1,750 of 996mm Tread Diameter in 1985-1996, 1,000 of 926mm in 1996. 1,200 of 1005mm dia. in 1985-86, 250 of 866mm dia. in 1996; 100 semifinished axles for tramcars in 1993.

Iraq:- 53 wheelsets, 920mm tread dia., UIC standard, in 1980. [Why an odd number?] Also 153 welded 3-axle bogies, 920mm dia. wheels, in 1981-82.

Iran:- 65 semifinished wheels, 1100mm dia., to AAR standards, for locomotives, in 1988.

Jordan:- 3,711 semifinished wheels, 863mm dia., UIC standard, in 1994-2003. For hopper cars; 1,310 semifinished wheels, 914mm dia., AAR standard, in 1995-2000; 30 semifinished wheels, 710mm tread dia., UIC standard, in 1995.

Saudi Arabia. Semifinished wheels: 7,900 of 838mm dia., to AAR standards, 1995-2003; 600 914mm dia. to AAR standards, 1995-97; 2,300 920mm dia. to AAR standards, 1997-2003; 1,600 1016mm dia., AAR, 1995-2003; 100 semifinished axles to AAR standards in 2001, and 50 semifinished axles to UIC standards also in 2001.

Syria:- 160 welded Y25 Ls Type bogies, 920mm dia. in 1978, 508 wheelsets, 920mm dia. 1977-1989.

Turkey:- 400 wheels, 352mm dia., for Draisines, in 1994; 600 wheels, 406mm. dia., for Draisines, 1993-1998.

Semifinished wheels - 100 of 680mm dia. in 2001; 100 of 710mm dia. in 1998; 220 of 750mm dia., in 1993; 29,600 of 920mm dia., 1996-2003; 9,600 of 1000mm dia., in 1993-2002; 2,300 of 1000mm dia. for locomotives, 1994-2002; 40 of 1050mm dia., in 2000; 4,080 of 1100mm dia. for locomotives, 1994-2001; 1000 of 1220mm dia., for locomotives, 1993-1997; 36,726 wheelsets, 920mm dia., for freight cars, 1982-2002; 3,900 wheelsets, 920mm dia., for passenger coaches, 1990-1996; 176 wheelsets with alternator fitted, 920mm dia., for passenger coaches, 1990-1991; 800 wheelsets with brake discs, for passenger coaches, 920mm dia., 1999; 12,422 wheelsets, 1000mm dia., 1979-2002; 56 wheelsets with driving gear for locomotives, 1100mm dia., 1985; 310 bogies, Y25Ls(s)d type, 920mm dia., 2004.

In addition, p. 11 notes (without giving any details) that locomotives, coaches, wagons and rolling-stock repair workshops were exported to Egypt; locomotives and wagons to Iran; locomotives, coaches and wagons to Iraq; locomotives, coaches and wagons to Syria; and locomotives to Turkey.

It will be noted that many of these exports occurred or commenced before the break-up of the Eastern Bloc.

Israel Railways has several wag-

ons built by Arbel Fauvet Rail - they are situated at 140, Rue du Paradis, 59500 Douai, France. <www.a-f-r.fr >

Aharon Gazit also attended, and his report includes:-

"The K.G.M. Group of Israel, a member of which visited Innotrans, signed there an historic agreement with the Australian air conditioning manufacturer Air Transit International; this is the first time that this company will sell in Israel, and as far as railways are concerned, it will have to compete mainly with Hagenuk; the K.G.M. Group represents also-among the others: CAF; Kiepe; Hanning & Kahl; Edilon, etc.

An initiative taken by The Israel Export & International Cooperation Institute (with which I personally helped), was the organization, for the first time, of a visit by 12 senior members of different Israeli industries at Innotrans; the thirteenth was exhibiting there for at least the second time "Scan-master"; all the 12 reported to be very satisfied from the visit, which they described as "very fruitful and a completely new world discovered"!

The firms included:-

Elspec Ltd. - Advanced Solutions in the field of Power Quality and Energy Savings.

Benmtal. Electric motors, alternators and other motion systems.

ScanMaster Systems Ltd. - Ultrasonic Non-Destructive Industrial systems.

Summet Hi-Tech coating - Thermo-chemical surface modification of metals.

A.L. Filter. - Manufacture of automotive filters.

Polyrit - Integrated Ployurethane Parts.

Urdan - Associated Steel industries - steel and ferrous casting.

AHT - Under-Floor Heating system.

Tirosh David - high quality aluminium sand.

Isralaser Ltd.

Greenspan Engineering Works Ltd.

Iscar - Metalworking Tools.

AGAM Metal Works Ltd. - a leading metal works company."

(i). On 66:14. RAFIAH STATION.

An unnumbered and undated (but obviously WW2 vintage) drawing has been turned up in the IRM Archives which allows an addendum to the article in 66:14. It shows that, as surmised, Rafiah station was indeed considerably expanded for Second World War traffic

with the three loops of 1938 being increased to eight in WW2. The turning triangle was relaid, but leading off to the south rather than to the west as originally. A "station office" appears on the north side of the line, approximately where the platform is shown on the 1918 layout in 66:14.

(k). LIGHT RAILWAY UPDATES.

A couple of recent finds add information to some loose ends from previous issues.

1). Nahariyya. Chen Melling has been wasting his time in the Haifa University library (!) instead of applying himself to his studies and has come up with extracts from two Hebrew language books which enlarge on the "Feldbahn" at Nahariyya (see 54:3 for fuzzy photo and notes, and 56:8(k) for initial update). One book is titled 'History of Nahariyya 1934-1948', on pages 28 & 29 of which are three photos featuring the light railway and a small flat wagon. The other book is called 'Nahariyya - Story of a City' (sic - size is relative depending where you are). This book has a few notes from a prospectus concerning the plots of land and the railway layout. These state that the railway was to be 60cm gauge and would be used to transport agricultural produce "to the main street in the commercial centre. There the produce would be transferred to a wagon coupled to a locomotive which was to take the output of several plots to a reception centre, to the co-operative". This sounds an extravagantly complicated way of doing things to me. Nothing has ever been found to hint at such a loco in Nahariyya, so it is evident the plot owners had to rely on their own muscle power alone.

2). Wilhelma. The possibility of a Decauville branch to Wilhelma (now Benei Atarot) in 1917 (or even before) has been discussed more than once in past issues. A coloured British map (scale 1:40000 and marked SECRET) prepared by the Field Survey Coy. RE.GHQ.EEF. dated 7/3/18 and printed by the Survey of Egypt clearly shows a "Decauville Railway" heading west from the main line just north of "London Bridge".

(l). COPYING WOES.

(i). Paul writes, angrily:- "I'm informed by Sybil that it is no longer allowed to photocopy maps for a reasonable price at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Instead, they will condescend to computer scan a 60x60cm copy for the price of 180 Shekels per copy. If true, then this is downright

bloody daylight robbery and I hope that potential researchers (despite the frustration of having to forego a copy) will treat the University in this matter with the contempt it deserves and look elsewhere." I suppose the University's point of view is that they need the money!

(ii). In 65:11 I had some words of complaint concerning important negatives that are unavailable for viewing in the Australian War Memorial photo database. Since then the AWM has informed me that these views are most unlikely to be made available for viewing on their web site anytime soon, but it is possible to order prints based on the caption details alone.

(m). PATHÉ NEWSREELS.

Once upon a time (i.e. before the television age) the cinema newsreels were the only way to see in motion what was happening in the world. Now you can relive those shaky black & white days at <www.britishpathe.com> which allows you to see, albeit through a glass darkly, clips from the archives of a famous British newsreel company that Chen Melling discovered during his surfing sessions. Several show scenes from Palestine at the end of the Mandate, of which two have particular railway interest.

Clips 1119.03 and 1514.07 show similar, if not identical, views of a train wreck dated 14/8/47 showing an overturned P Class 4-6-0.

Clip 2351.05 was taken on Remembrance Day 11/11/47, the second half of which shows Ras el Ain station after a terrorist attack and features a nice shot of LMS 2-8-0 70510.

In addition to the above there are other railway scenes of various duration in different clips. One, of a visit to Palestine by Henry Wallace (who was he?), even shows a glimpse of Decauville track at an unidentified settlement in what looks rather like the Jordan Valley.

(n). DECAUVILLE EXHIBIT.

Latest acquisition at the Haifa Museum is a length of 60cm gauge Decauville track, approximately five metres long and complete with metal sleepers, probably dating from World War 1. This was uncovered during digging operations near the loco depot at Lod and set aside for disposal. Fortunately, Evyatar Reiter happened to see it there and contacted the Museum. Enquiries were made immediately but the Decauville track had already disappeared, consigned to the scrapman. Pessach Zal (Museum volunteer and the

man with the contacts at Lod) made further frantic enquiries and the track was traced to Beersheba, from where it returned to Lod. It was then transported to the Museum, arriving on 25/11/04.

(o). MODELLING NOTES - SYRIAN COACHES.

Following earlier references, we are pleased to note that a limited edition of some 60 each of CFS passenger coaches has indeed been produced. The brochure notes (in German) that: "At the beginning of the 1980's the Syrian State Railways required a large number of modern coaches for the Damascus - Homs line. The VEB Bautzen works in the DDR received a contract for a total of 358 bogie coaches of 'Type Y' in various configurations. The 'StädteExpress' livery, (orange/cream), at that time quite modern, was retained. delivery took place in 1982-83. The coaches have performed well under extreme climatic conditions and are in many cases still in use.

HO Models: Two versions of the Syrian 2nd. Class coach, with different numbers, to exact 1:87 scale with all details as per the prototypes. The coaches have been made for the firm Naumann Modelleisenbahn by the firm Sachsenmodelle, as a one-off special series.

Order Nos: 'DOModels 121' for coach No. 51 97 2069065-9, and 'DOModels 122' for coach No. 51 97 2069098-0." The coaches cost 63.90 each.

We understand around a half of the production run have already been sold; details and orders to: Ferenc Naumann. Chemnitzer Straße 108, D-51067 Cologne / Germany. Fax: +49 221 6910696. Naumann@Ferenc.de, or www.Naumann-online.de. The firm specialises in small runs of specialist models - the current brochure includes, for example, Greek and Portuguese prototypes.

Gerhard Riedel points out, for the sake of the rivet-counters, that whilst the original livery was indeed orange/beige, as per DDR specifications, there were some slight modifications that, for cost reasons, cannot be incorporated into such a small series. In Syria certain coaches have been repainted by hand, and current colours are closer to red than to orange. There are other differences - for example, a few roof details do not match the Syrian version, and there is one window missing on the side without a toilet - whereas the side with the toilet is totally correct. The Syrian coaches are saloon only, not compartment, so any compartment interiors would need removal; they have curtains, often drawn against the sunlight and heat. Nevertheless, this decision to produce models of Middle East relevance is an initiative to be welcomed.

67:7.

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

In this issue we include an 'overview' report and have concentrated items concerned with the former Hedjaz line together under that heading.

A. INNOTRANS REPORT.

During a visit to the 'Innotrans' Exhibition in Berlin, the Editor observed a part of a session on Eastern Europe and Asia. In a speech by Herr Hartmut Mehdorn of DB it was stated that the aim was to reach a transit time of two weeks from Berlin to Peking; at present the 'Ostwind' freight train runs three times a week from Berlin via Minsk to Kazakhstan. The big problem in accelerating services remains the border issue - waits, paperwork, checks, as well of course as the changing of motive power. It can take up to three weeks for freight to get from Berlin to Warsaw!

However, the emphasis in the presentations was on use of the 'northern' route - i.e. the Trans-Siberian - rather than more southerly routes through Turkey and Iran, which would have been more relevant to this magazine. Nevertheless, the outlook is for a surge in freight traffic between Asia and Europe - ships take 3 weeks, a saving of even a week in getting the product to market means, for Mehdorn, an appreciable reduction in interest and unit costs for the shipper.

See the separate item below on relevant exhibitors.

B. TURKEY.

(i). TURKISH RAILTOUR.

Over the period March 19th. - 27th. 2005, a very extensive and comprehensive railtour is being organised through almost the whole of Turkey - admittedly using Diesel traction. The provisional but ambitious itinerary comprises:

Day 1. Ankara - Kayseri (Hanli-Bosnonkaya) - the Sivas avoiding line, normally freight-only. reversal, then to Sivas in daylight. Sivas - Samsun overnight.

Day 2. Samsun branches to Azot and Casamba, then Samsun - Sivas in daylight, overnight to Cetinkaya.

Day 3. Early morning trip round Cetinkaya triangle, then on to Kars; Kars - Dogukapi, and overnight Kars - Malatya.

Day 4. Malatya - Elazig - Tatvan - Train Ferry crossing - Van - Kapikoy; Overnight return to Elazig.

Day 5: Elazig - Kurtalan. Overnight return Kurtalan - Malatya.

Day 6. Trip around Malatya triangle, Malatya - Kahramanmaraş branch (& return), then Gaziantep - Fevzipasa.

Day 7. Fevzipasa - Tahtakopru - or as far as possible - (this line is in situ but unused at present.) Then on to Iskenderun overnight.

Day 8. Trip around Iskenderun docks, then to Mersin, trip around docks - Adana. (works visit if time allows.) Overnight back to Ankara.

Day 9. Arr. Ankara, visit to works, shed.

The train will comprise a Restaurant Car, a Day Car with compartments, two or three Sleeping Cars with showers, and at each end an older coach with opening windows for enthusiast observations. Price will be in the region of GBP 1,000. Expressions of interest to eerailtours@aol.com or East Europe Rail Tours Ltd., 'Birchwood', Shatterford, Bewdley, DY12 1TP, England, fax. 01299-861058. More details (with photos) can be downloaded from < www.easteuroperailtours.com > and/or their partners in organisation, < www.turkeys wonders.com >

(ii). OLD COACHES.

A note and photo in "Modell Eisenbahner" for Sept. 1993, p.18, refers to a old German-style coach which a reader (Stefan Karau from Potsdam) saw and photographed at Basmane station in 1992 - "together with an English-style saloon and a rebuilt German 'Hechtwagen'. (This term, literally 'Pike', refers to those steel coaches whose ends are bent inwards giving them a semi-streamlined appearance.). The coach in question looked very similar to those of the Kaiser's train - it rested on four-wheel Prussian-style bogies, had matt/frosted windows for the toilet compartment, with squared end niches for the doors. The roof clerestory arrangement seemed to have been rebuilt at some time. It was labelled 'Salon' with a TCDD number (not noted!).

Also on display were an 0-6-0ST with inside cylinders, and several goods wagons of early German style. The writer noted that at Alsancak he had

found a small railway museum with English and German steam locos and German and Italian railcars, and 30km. from Izmir near Selcuk (is this Camlik?) a larger railway museum.

(iii). BOSNIAN ELECTRIC LOCOS.

The use of these locos in Turkey has already been mentioned on several occasions. During a conversation with a chap at the Koncar stand at 'Innotrans', it was learned that twenty of the ZBH 25kW AC 50Hz Bo-Bos had been leased for a period, probably, of six years, to TCDD; the rebuild had been carried out by Koncar, a firm which specialises in electrical installations. They are numbered in the E 52 000 series, and can reach 140 kph.. The newer batch, so-called 'second generation', numbered in the E52 500 series, is being regeared for speeds of 160 km/h, and two of these are already in Turkey. They are fitted with thyristor control, and are of 3840 KW. [But see below!].

A nice photo of E52 521 in TCDD livery at Zagreb station following its release from the Koncar works and described as "the first of the second batch". The livery is white sides and front., with a broad mid-blue band along the lower portion of the body, and an orange stripe above (but separated from that, with another orange stripe at the top of the body sides, extending at the ends below the cab windows. The doors to the cabs are also orange.

(iv). ACCIDENT REPORTS.

Following earlier reports, (See Harak. 66, p.27), 'Today's Railways' 106, p. 42 notes "Three Rail Disasters in Three Weeks". Barely a week after the derailment of a Hydarpara-Ankara express on 22 July, when 38 passengers lost their lives, a level crossing incident in Turkey resulted in the death of 15 occupants of a minibus. Then on 11 August a Hydarpara-Ankara express with around 170 passengers on board passed a red signal and ploughed head-on at 85 km/h into an Ankara-Adapazari train in Tavşanlı station, resulting in eight people being killed and 80 injured. It transpired that the express locomotive was on hire from ZRS (Bosnia-Herzegovina) and was not fitted with TCDD's automatic braking system which comes into effect when a signal is passed at danger. In fact, of the 738 locomotives operated by TCDD, only 208 are equipped with this device. The network also has two levels of signalling, though attempts are being made to standardise these.

The first and third accident in-

involved three Class E52.5 electric locos of which TCDD has 20 on hire from Bosnian Railways (Class 441). The derailment involved E52 512 (ZFBH 441 006) while the head-on collision involved E52 502 (ZFBH 441 528) and E52 506 (ZFBH 441 810). Both the latter were seriously damaged and will be scrapped."

(v). MARMARA TUNNEL NEWS.

In "I.R.J." Sept. 2004 p. 9:- "The Japan Bank for International Cooperation has agreed to provide a loan of Yen 74 billion (\$US 671 million) towards construction of the Marmaray railway tunnel beneath the Bosphorus. The 13.3 km. link will cost an estimated 2.5 billion." RGI (9/04 p. 522) refers to this as a 'second tranche loan'.

(vi). CONCRETE SLEEPERS.

From "I.R.J." Sept. 2004 p. 17:- "TCDD has ordered 500,000 concrete sleepers from Pfeleiderer, Germany, for installation on the Ankara - Eskisehir section of the Ankara - Istanbul line. The contract is worth 20 Million."

It isn't clear if this order pre-dates the catastrophes that have occurred on this line due to track condition!

(vii). EAST EXPRESS.

A note in 'Today's Railways' 108 p.42 informs us that "on 30 September, Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian and Turkish Railways (SZ, HZ, ZS, DBZ and TCDD) signed an agreement under which the five national operators would collaborate in running a new freight service along Corridor X from Ljubljana to Istanbul, the 1450km. run taking 60 hours by rail compared with 90 hours by lorry. To gauge the market, a weekly pilot service is to be offered for an initial 3-month period."

C. SAUDI ARABIA.

(i). ARTICLE ON CURRENT STATE AND PLANS.

From: "Middle East Online" of 21st. Sept. 2004:

"IN SAUDI ARABIA, FAST TRAINS BUT FEW PASSENGERS.

Miniature Saudi railway system awaits private sector to lead ambitious expansion of network across kingdom. By Ali Khalil - Riyadh.

It is nearly 6:00 pm at Riyadh's only railway station - a rush-hour time almost worldwide - but in this tidy terminal, no more than 20 people including staff members are around. It is not a strike that is keeping passengers away from the modern station. It's just that

the last train to the eastern city of Dammam left more than two hours ago, while the next departure is not for another three hours.

"Many people are usually around when there is a train," said the Pakistani taxi driver who argued with a rival over a passenger at the deserted taxi bay. Only four passenger trains per day operate from the six-platform station and along the sole operating track in the vast desert kingdom. The trains carried around 900,000 passengers in 2003 between the capital - home to some four million - and the center of the oil-rich Eastern Province.

The Saudi Railways Organisation (SRO) believes that the existing service has improved immensely during the past three years in terms of passengers and freight transport. Khaled al-Yahya, who heads SRO, said that the number of passengers increased by 25 percent during the past three years, while freighted goods increased by over 33 percent to two million tonnes. The line serves mainly as a connection between the King Abdul Aziz port on the Gulf and the capital. Freight trains transported around 120,000 containers during the last Islamic calendar year, Yahya said. The trains cross the 450-kilometer (280-mile) distance in four hours. Yahya said that trains in Saudi Arabia "rank third in Asia in terms of speed".

But SRO has ambitious plans to crisscross the kingdom, which is around four times the size of France, with a rail network connecting the main cities scattered across the endless desert. "The kingdom's economy ranks among the largest 25 economies in the world. But as far as the rail network is concerned, and taking into consideration the size of the territory and population growth, the kingdom comes around 70th," Yahya said.

A 950-kilometer (600-mile) loop from Riyadh to Jeddah on the Red Sea is the centerpiece of a multi-billion-dollar expansion plan, joining existing lines from the capital to the oil city of Dammam. This coast-to-coast line would cut transportation time for containers from Dammam to Riyadh and on to the Jeddah Islamic Port, the kingdom's main sea outlet, by about a week compared to shipping.

A 115-kilometer (70-mile) line will also be built between Dammam, the city's international airport and the industrial seaport of Jubail on the Gulf.

A 570-kilometer (355-mile) line between Mecca, Medina and Jeddah and extending north to the Red Sea industrial city of Yanbu is also planned to ease the travel of some two million pil-

grims who visit Muslim holy sites during the annual pilgrimage.

But the government wants to build the railway network without tapping its coffers, relying instead on private investments - a step that reflects the scarcity of disposable public funds and the increasing belief in the need to ease the public sector's grip over economic activities.

The expansion plan is currently in the hands of a consultancy consortium, which has teamed Swiss UBS bank and the Saudi National Commercial Bank with France's state-run railways SNCF, to prepare the studies for the project "which will be tendered on BOT (build, operate and transfer) basis", Yahya said. The kingdom, which aims to privatise the whole network eventually, will continue using diesel-fueled locomotives in the new expanded network. It is not "economically feasible to use an electric network due to the long distances and low level of usage", added Yahya."

(ii). ELECTRIFICATION AND OTHER PLANS.

A similar story appears in "International Railway Journal" Sept. 2004 p.2:-

"Semaly, France, in partnership with the Middle East engineering firm, Dar Al-Handasah, has won a Riyals 8 million (\$US 2.1 million) contract to prepare preliminary plans for an electric railway network in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia.

The project is just the latest part of a major national plan to increase the use of railways in and between major cities in the Kingdom. The multi-billion dollar programme, some of which has been on the cards for years, includes a 950km. line from Riyadh to Jeddah connecting with existing lines from the capital to Dammam.

The coast-to-coast line would cut the journey time for containers travelling between Dammam, Riyadh and the country's main seaport, Jeddah Islamic Port, by one week compared with the sea route.

A 115km. line is also planned between Dammam, Dammam International Airport and the industrial port of Jubail on the Arabian Gulf. A 570km. 'Pilgrims' line' is also planned between Mecca, Medina and Jeddah, and then northwards to the industrial city of Yanbu.

Meanwhile, plans to privatise Saudi railways are moving ahead. The London-based international law firm, Linklaters, has won a tender to advise the Saudi Railways Organisation (SRO)

on privatisation of the existing network and the programme of new rail projects. A consortium of UBS Investment Bank and The National Commercial Bank were previously selected to provide financial advisory services to SRO."

An item in "R.G.I." Sept. 2004 p. 511 notes that SRO had appointed not only Linklaters but the local law Office of Abdulaziz H. Fahad to act as legal advisers for the forthcoming privatisation in connection with the construction of the planned Riyadh-Jeddah line. On p. 524 the Riyadh line is referred to as a "light rail network".

(iii). NEW LOCOS.

From "I.R.J." Sept. 2004 p. 17:- "Saudi Railways Organisation has ordered eight locomotives from General Motors Electro-Motive Division (EMD) Canada, at a cost of Riyals 70 million (\$US 19 million)." From "R.G.I." Sept. 2004 p.511:- "On August 12 SRO President Khaled Alyahya confirmed that the railway had ordered eight diesel locos from General Motors EMD at a cost of 70.5M Riyals. (see RGI 3.04 p.159".) Two sources, two prices - but what is half a million Riyals between friends?

(iv). MEDINA 'EL'

From "I.R.J." Sept. 2004 p. 12. "Medina: Plans are being developed for a 10km. elevated electric train project in the Saudi holy city to facilitate the movement of pilgrims and visitors between the Prophet's Mosque, the Quba Mosque, and the Shuhada area. The system, designed to transport 20,000 passengers/hour, is due in service in 2007. Project viability is assured as at least five million people attend the annual Haj and Umrah pilgrimages."

The RGI 9/04 p.524 version of the same story is: "Officials in Madinah announced in August that work had begun on a 10km. elevated monorail lining the Qubaa area with Alshuhadaa, planned to carry 20,000 passengers/h. from 2007." Note the differences in place-name spellings. The Qubaa is of course the large black stone shrine marking the spot where a meteorite landed, central point of all Haj pilgrimages.

D. IRAQ.

(i). POSTSCRIPT FROM RICK DEGMAN.

Further to the article in 'Trains' Magazine for July 2004, (See 66:11:C:(i)), a 'Postscript' appeared in 'Trains' for September 2004, pp. 52f. (Incidentally, a German translation of

the original article, together with all the original pictures, has appeared in 'Bahnprofil' for Sept./Oct. 2004, pp. 18-33). It is entitled "Reflections on My Brief Career":

"Right around the time I wrote my article 'U.S. Railroader in Iraq' ... the Iraq I had come to respect and appreciate changed. It started with a trip we wanted to take from Baghdad to Mosul.

Several senior advisors to CPA Administrator L. Paul Bremer, U.S. Presidential Envoy to Iraq, approached our department and said they wanted to take an inspection trip by train to Mosul and the border post of Rabiya. Gordon Mott, my boss, decided this would also enable him to inspect the massive railway shop at Bayji, which was severely damaged by looting. I wanted to go just to go.

We discussed the trip with Task Force Rail, a military unit that coordinates railway security with the Coalition Provisional Authority, the U.S.-led organization that runs Iraq. TFR thought security farther north was suspect and requested we go only as far north as Bayji.

So, on April 3, we left for Bayji. The train consisted of "Saddam" locomotive 2559, a couchette (sleeper), a power car, and a refurbished coach. It was a beautiful day and the train operated perfectly. We went through many towns in the news such as Taji, Tikrit and Samarra, and had no problems whatsoever with insurgents. Just as on previous inspection trips, many Iraqi Republic Railways (IRR) employees came to greet the train as it rolled through the towns. On the return we had time for conversation. The night before, the CPA had closed the newspaper of Shiite Muslim firebrand cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. A National Public Radio reporter who was aboard thought this was so stupid, that nobody liked this guy outside of Baghdad, but he could cause serious problems in Sadr City, a slum of 2.5 million Shiites in eastern Baghdad. She felt this move would elevate an ineffectual cleric within the community and turn things nasty. A retired British brigadier general aboard had a different opinion. He also felt al-Sadr was insignificant, but that he had been preaching hate and murder for too long, and action was way overdue. He felt the CPA should wipe out his party quickly, and most Shiites would quietly approve. Both made good arguments. Both would prove correct in some respects, and wrong in others.

The rest of the trip was uneventful. By the time we reached Baghdad, it was dark. The station platform was filled

with nearly every major IRR manager waiting to greet us. It was a touching moment on what would prove to be one of our last nights of peace in Baghdad for a while.

It took about five days for things to get really hot in Baghdad. There were rumours CPA intelligence was picking up hints of a major attack within the Green Zone, the protected area in Baghdad where most of us live and work. There are about 6,000 Iraqis living within the zone. The CPA closed down the gates of the zone and restricted our movements. We were allowed to leave our living areas only to go to work, the PX, and the gym, but not without a partner and a weapon.

Then the rockets started coming. On Easter, during the second day of lockdown, I was in our trailer taking a shower at about 6 a.m. when the whole trailer shook violently. A rocket had just landed 700 feet away. This became a regular occurrence over the next few mornings. One rocket hit about 100 feet from a friend's trailer. Luckily, they never hit anything except an unoccupied bus stop by the Al Rashid Hotel, but they did a wonderful job of shaking everybody up.

In the midst of this, I got a 'get-out-of-jail-free' card. Gordon had arranged for a delegation of IRR managers to visit the States and meet railway signalling systems vendors, sponsored by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. I was to hold down the fort. About five days prior, however, Gordon learned we had a problem. If he went, he would be 'tainted' by contact with the vendors, and couldn't be involved in selecting the winning bidder. All the tickets had been bought and the schedule finalised. Gordon decided to let me escort the group around the U.S. while he went to Washington to work with officials on other issues. I was excited, both about the trip and the potential to escape from danger.

Meanwhile, the situation worsened. The airport highway became the target of choice. We wondered if we'd be able to make it to the airport, and if we did, if any planes would still be flying. We looked at trying to leave early, or even drive around Fallujah (gasp!) to Jordan, but ultimately we decided to stick to the planned departure and hope for the best. We seriously considered not coming back. We couldn't work this way because we couldn't do our jobs. We took everything of personal value with us.

The morning of departure was tense. Amazingly, everything went according to plan, but the ride to the air-

port was scary. I've taken the trip many times, but this was the first time I saw a burning Army truck on the road and an M-A1 tank moving down the opposing lane from us to provide security. We made it to the terminal without problems, but we didn't relax until the plane took off, climbed out of missile range, and headed west.

The trip went well. The Iraqi railroaders were astounded by the U.S. All had travelled to Europe and Asia before, but as we all know America is something else altogether. The schedule was jammed and everything went by quickly, with visits to four signalling vendors and the Department of Transportation, and tours of several railroads.

The trip allowed us to contemplate my choices. Despite our relief at being back in the States, Gordon and I separately concluded our work was not done. I came back to finish my six months. That was the commitment I originally made, and I decided I would live up to it.

Things have returned to what passes for normal here. The railway and its people march on. They take setbacks stoically and work untiringly in a dangerous environment to make things a little better every day. It takes a certain kind of person to risk his life just by going to work. The IRR and its people deserve the chance to succeed.

As part of the handover of power to the interim Iraqi Government, we staged a little ceremony in Baghdad Central Station. Ambassador Bremer formally gave control of the Ministry of Transportation to our Iraqi partners. We joked to our IRR friends that they could now kick us out and take over our office. They thought this was hugely funny, laughed very hard, and shared in the celebrations.

I write this on a very hot afternoon in early June. In 12 short days, I'll fly back to the States to rejoin friends and family. Iraq will never leave me, however. I believe that what we are doing here is important, and we can't leave until the people of Iraq are truly free from the terror and tyranny that still hides in the dark recesses of the country. Iraqis are a great people, and will emerge from these troubles proud, strong and free.

Meanwhile it's getting hotter every day. Today it should reach about 110 degrees. Of course, Gordon says, 'Just wait a few more weeks. This is nothing yet'."

(ii). INTERCHANGE TRAFFIC.

Also in 'Trains' 9/2004, p. 76, is a "Reader's Letter and Response". A

Mr. Ernest H. Robl of Durham, NC, wrote:-

"... I noticed locomotives are equipped with both UIC (European) buffer and link couplers as well as knuckle couplers. Is all rolling stock equipped with both types of coupler, or only locomotives? If cars have only one type of coupler, which cars have which type? Does that pose compatibility problems? Is traffic interchanged with Syria, and if so, what is it? Is newly acquired equipment delivered overland via Syria or by ship?"

To which Rick Degman replied:- "Mr. Robl is right. The Iraq Republic Railways (IRR) locomotives are equipped with both coupling systems so they can interchange traffic with Syria and, therefore, Turkey and the rest of the EC. Only the IRR locomotives are dual-equipped. On occasion, IRR freight wagons interchange to Syria, and buffer wagons with different couplers on each end are used.

There is indeed a great deal of traffic moving between Syria and Iraq. Syrian Railway delivers grain, refined oil products, reconstruction material, and consumer goods from Turkey to the IRR, and IRR sends back refined crude. There is also a once-a-week overnight sleeping car between Mosul and Aleppo, Syria, that utilizes East German-manufactured Syrian equipment. Most of the new rolling stock comes in by rail or highway from Syria; the IRR just received 50 new ballast wagons from Algeria this way. Owing to clearance issues, the Russian locomotives have been trucked on lowbody flatbeds from Syria to Ramadi [I think this means road vehicles. Ed.], placed in their trucks, then moved by rail to Baghdad for final assembly."

(iii). MORE ROLLING STOCK.

Also in 'Trains' 9/2004, p. 14, is an article surveying the growth amongst railway rolling stock builders in the USA. This includes:-

"In those orders are 250 container flats approved by the Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority, to be built by Greenbrier's Polish manufacturing facility, Wagony Swidnica, acquired in 1998."

(iv). SPARE PARTS.

From "I.R.J." Sept. 2004, p. 16. "Iraq Republic Railway is seeking rolling stock spare parts and track maintenance equipment as part of its post-war renovation programme."

(v). MILITARY REPORTS.

From Marc Stegeman I have received a few items - 'Unclassified' Situ-

ation Reports - apparently from 27th./28th. April 2003 - that cast light on conditions of the time. There are many abbreviations employed - some of which I can make out, but confirmation and elucidation will be welcomed.

[By the way - I typed 'Iraq Railways' into Yahoo and got 168,000 different entries.....! Someone else will have to do the digging to get the full story of railway developments over the past few years! Editor.]

(a). Under "3 I." :- "358 CA BDE (1 MEF AOR) The Iraqis drove an engine and sleeper car from Baghdad to Al Basrah and returned the next day. They did this on their own because of what the UK has done in Al Basrah. Three trouble spots were reported in As Samawah by the Iraqi operators. The 507th. STRE (engineers) have requested aviation support to recon[noitre] the damage and assess the time and equipment needed. Aviation support has been requested for on or about 28 Apr[il] In addition, the 52 Sqdn. (rail) UK plans on doing a military assessment of the rail from Al Basrah to Baghdad to verify for the military (CYA). The UK has found three names of Iraqis as points of contact in Nasariyah, Samawa and Baghdad to help get the workers back to work. Attempts have been made to notify the CA [Civil Administration?] units to make contact wto get the workers back. The Iraqis want to come back to work and do not want the military to do the work for them. However, they have 'Lost' their tools. They also want to be paid. This is a big issue. However, ORHA has established a procedure to start paying all civil servants. CAS has to be involved. Finally, CFLCC has turned the rest of the US Rail Battalion off. They are currently at Ft. McCoy. This means there will not be a rail unit in country. V-Corps wants the railroad north of Baghdad operational for military sustainment as soon as possible."

(b). "Last 24 Hours. 304 CA BDE along with a UK team, CATA escorted 80+ Iraqi port workers from Umm Qasr through both the new port and old port facilities. Initial coordination with the Iraqis took place at the water treatment facility in Umm Qasr. After passes were issued, they were escorted to the main port. The contingent consisted of engineers, maintenance workers and mechanics, all or most of whom were previously employed at the port. They broke off into several groups to assess the condition of the port facility. The inspection started at approx 1000 and concluded approx 1430. To-

day was considered a work day for all those who came onto the port and apparently they will be paid for it. At the old port, the Iraqi inspection team managed to start up three grain elevators and assess the maintenance facility and spare parts storage. One of the Iraqi port personnel claimed that the fuel storage tanks they inspected had over 200,000 litres of fuel and oil in them. CATB and WFP LNO met with DMC, 377th. TSC, and representatives of the 17th. P&M [Ports & Movements] to discuss future payments of workers by PRHA, through US Civil Affairs, to employees of the Iraqi Rail Company. The DMC is setting up a shipment of water to be delivered to the port within the next 7 - 10 days. The shipment of water, which will be delivered by LSV, will be shipped by rail to Baghdad. In addition to coordinating unloading the ship with the 17th. P&M, the DMC discussed payment of Iraqi workers by Pay Agents with US Civil Affairs, using funds provided by ORHA. DMC proposes to use Iraqi labour from the Iraqi Rail Company to load the containers onto rail cars. However, provisions have to be made to pay the Iraqi labourers (previously, small numbers of Iraqi rail labourers supporting port operations have been paid directly by the UK forces.) The DMC representatives produced a policy memorandum by ORHA that specified ORHA's reliance on CA to coordinate matters for paying Iraqi workers. A meeting with representatives of the Iraqi Rail Company, the 17th. P&M, and CA was scheduled for 28 April 2003 in Basra to begin initial discussions."

(c). "Last 24 Hours. ORHA met with Iraqi National Electric Commission. Conducted recon of 'Saddam City'. met with United Nations representatives about the World Food Program. Attended Baghdad Forum space allocation meeting. Paid US\$ 64,540 to 3,027 railroad workers and 100 security workers (both located at Baghdad station). Coordinating with Civil Affairs liaisons and working waste management issues at city hall. Meeting with Assyrian Democratic Party representative, Sciri representative, and Sunni religious leaders. Continue efforts to establish civil servant payment program throughout Iraq. The payment program remains the highest priority. Issued emergency payment to Baghdad utility workers....."

(d). From Sean D. Naylor in the 'Army Times', no date.

"There were more fireworks when the C Troop cavalymen blew a

cache of captured munitions as they withdrew from the compound. The blast triggered a much larger series of explosions that destroyed six nearby fuel tanks. These erupted with a massive boom, sending orange flames shooting hundreds of feet into the air, and a column of thick black smoke thousands of feet into the blue sky.

Meanwhile, U.S. forces spotted an Iraqi tank and some dismounted troops in a rail yard across the highway from the compound. Ferrell, the 3-7 commander, and his staff, including some attached Air Force enlisted tactical air controllers, worked feverishly to coordinate an air strike on the yard. Initial reports said the tank was a T-72 but McCoy said later that it was a T-55 on a rail car.

Once Ferrell was sure no U.S. forces were dangerously close to the target area, two A-10 Thunderbolt ground-attack aircraft appeared in the skies overhead. From about 8,000 feet, each A-10 released a 500-pound 'dumb bomb'. A few seconds later, a double thunderclap echoed from the direction of the rail yard, as two large plumes of gray smoke climbed above it. The watching cavalymen and airmen cheered loudly.

The A-10s then each made two 'gun passes', the buuuurp of their 30mm cannon followed by the deep crackling sound of their rounds raking targets in the yard. The pilots reported that they'd seen lots of dismounted infantry moving among revetments in the yard. Now, though, there was 'nothing moving'."

E. IRAN.

(i). INTERNATIONAL.

A note in 'Today's Railways' 106 (Oct. 2004) p. 56 states that the first freight train operated to the new port of Olya on 28th. July 2004. "The port is connected to RZD (Russian Railways') Volga Division network by new construction of 49km. costing around RUR 3 Billion (GBP 57 million), financed by RZD and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Olya port opened on 2nd. October 2003 - the first Russian container terminal on the Caspian Sea - following a 2000 agreement between Russia, India and Iran to develop the ironically named 'notrac' (north-south transport corridor) land/sea route connecting the Baltic ports with India's ports via several Caspian Sea ports. Since opening of Olya, goods between the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean regions and Europe take 15-23 days instead of 35 - 40 days via the

Suez Canal. Initial port capacity of 750,000 tonnes is expected to quickly rise to 4 million tonnes now the rail link is open."

A photo appears in Railway Gazette International (RGI) Sept. 2004, p. 511. It shows a container train carrying paper from Pravdinsk near Nizhny Novgorod to Iran, and the caption indicates the branch cost US\$ 100M!

(ii). MORE ASIAN LINKS - AZERBAIJAN.

An item in "I.R.J." Sept. 2004, p.2:-

The presidents of Iranian Islamic Republic Railways (RAI), Azerbaijan Railways and Russian Railways decided at a meeting in Tehran in July to set up a company with an initial capital of \$US 6M to construct a new line from Qazvin via Rasht and Anzali in Iran to Astara in Azerbaijan.

The new line will plug a major gap in the Asian rail network. RAI estimates that it will reduce the transit time for freight between Europe and Asia by up to 50% and costs by 30%."

(iii). NEW D.M.U.'S.

In 'Lok Magazin' 11/2004 p.28 is a photo of one of the new diesel multiple units for Iran under delivery run over the Semmering in Austria. The accompanying text: "On 28th. August 2004 the first unit of the new DH4-1 'Paradiso' diesel trains, developed by Siemens and built in Maribor (Slovenia) by Studenci, was delivered to Wien-Floridsdorf from Maribor via the border at Spielfeld-Strass and the Semmering line. This is the first of twenty such express units to be built for the Iran State Railways, capable of a top speed of 160km/h. It was to undergo trials over several weeks on various ÖBB lines. As is normal with such test series, the first runs are over the almost straight 'Nordbahn' line between Wien-Floridsdorf and Hohenau, for brake testing and running at higher speeds, up to 175 km/h.); the vehicles will then be trialled over the more curvaceous 'Südbahn' line (actually the former 'Crown Prince Rudolf Railway') between St. Michael and St. Veit an der Glan, to test its handling over sharp curves."

(iv). MORE SECOND-HAND COACHES FROM DENMARK.

A photo and caption in 'Lok Magazin' 12/2004 p.32 reports on the sale of a further 52 DSB coaches to Iran. They were transported via Germany, Austria, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey. We have reported

earlier on sales of second-hand coaches from Denmark and Spain to Iran, due to increased need for rolling stock outstripping the capacity of local industry. (See 29:6 - DB stock; 40:8 for 10 DSB coaches, 166 more in 1998 - 40:7(b); 28 from RENFE in 40:11, also 47:6; from SNCF in 42:9.)

(v). CHABAHAR PORT.

From "R.G.I." 9/2004 p. 523: "A consortium led by Ashok Leyland Project services of India has signed memoranda of understanding with the Ports & Shipping organisation for the development of a privately-financed port at Chabahar on the Gulf of Oman, and for the construction of a rail link to meet the RAI network at Bam."

(vi). NON-PURCHASE OF CROATIAN LOCOS:

A report in "Today's Railway's" 108, p.44, on the HZ Class 2063 Co-Co's of class 2063 notes that these fourteen locos (then classed 663) were purchased by the then-JZ Zagreb Division in 1972 - GM-EMD type GT26CW-2. Changing operational needs led to reallocations and some being stored out of use, and "In 2001 HZ tried to sell Class 2063 locos to Iran". Does anyone know more on this, or why the sale fell through? IR of course has some GT26CW types as well.

F: DUBAI.

(i). METRO PLANS.

From "I.R.J." Sept. 2004, p. 10:- "Shortlisted bidders for the civil engineering segment of the Dubai automatic light metro project are due to be announced this month, but according to the Dubai-based 'Khaleej Times' six bidders have been selected from a field of more than 50 for the \$US 3.9 billion project. (IRJ April '04 p. 8 refers.)

The newspaper's sources list them as: Bilfinger Taisei/Besix; Bouygues/Vinci/Hochtief/CCIC; Consorcio Dutco Balfour Beatty/RoyalBam-Interbeton/Parsons Transportation; Obayashi/Yapi Merkezi; Bin Laden group, Saudi Arabia; and Oderbrecht, South Africa."

In "R.G.I." Sept. 2004 p. 520 it is noted that the metro is to have two lines but has different information on the shortlisted bids: "Odebrecht of Brazil and the Saudi Arabian Bin Laden group are two companies which have submitted individual bids. They are understood to be bidding against four international joint ventures: Parsons Transportation of the USA working with Yapi Merkezi of Turkey; Bouygues of France with Vinci and Hochtief; a group

including Balfour Beatty and Royal BAM of the Netherlands; and Germany's Bilfinger Berger working with Besix of Belgium and Taisei of Japan."

(ii). RESORT MONORAIL.

Also from "I.R.J." Sept. 2004, p. 12: "The Atlantis Resort on the Palm, a man-made area in the shape of a palm tree, is to be served by a monorail starting at Jumeirah on the 'trunk' of the Palm. The \$US 1.1 Billion resort is due for completion in late 2007. The monorail will be supplied by property developer, Nakheel."

G. SYRIA.

(i). From "I.R.J." Sept. 2004 p. 17:- "Syrian Railways has invited tenders from consultants to provide a preliminary technical and economic study into a proposed upgraded line from Al-Sharkeyeh to the Muhine-Damascus main line."

(ii). "Syrian Railways seeks bids to supply 200 two-axle bogies for phosphate wagons."

H. HEDJAZ. We include here notes from Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, that are more concerned with the former Hedjaz than with more modern developments.

(i). SYRIA. From "C.R.J." 139 (Autumn 2004) p. 252:-

"The following notes are based on the report of a participant in a Steam Loco Safari Tours visit from 25th. April to 1st. May 2004.

DAMASCUS: The line between Kanawat station and Cadem was being totally rebuilt and all rail services were terminated at Cadem. It was said that the standard gauge was to be extended through to Kanawat as part of this work. At Kanawat 2-6-0T 62 remains plinthed outside the station.

At CADEM Works, locomotives present were Hohenzollern 0-6-0T's 33, 34, 35, 37, Jung 2-6-0T 61, Hartmann 2-8-0 106, Borsig 2-8-0 161, Hartmann 2-8-2's 259, 260 (under repair) and 263, SLM 2-6-0T's 752, 753, SLM 0-6-2T's 803, 804, 805. Many of these are long-term derelicts. De Dion Bouton railcar ACM3 performed in the yard. because of the aforementioned engineering works, four locos were stabled, and temporarily marooned, at the suburban station of Hamme on the Serghaya line: Hartmann 2-8-0 90 and SLM 2-6-0T's 741, 744, 745.

DERA'A. Lined up for photography on the afternoon of 29th. April were Jung 2-6-0T+T 66, Hartmann 2-8-0

91, Borsig 2-8-0 160, Hartmann 2-8-2 262 and Hartmann 0-4-4-2T 962.

SPECIAL TRAINS:- On 28th. April, 91 worked tender-first from Mezerib into the Yarmuk Gorge to Zezoun, and ran round to return to Mezerib. Later, another run was made into the Gorge, with 262 tender-first leading the train and 962. After a number of run-pasts with 962, its water ran short and it headed the train back to Mezerib, with 262 acting as banker. Next day another trip was made into the Gorge, with 91 and 160. Later 262 worked from Dera'a to Mahaje, on the main line towards Damascus.

On the afternoon of 30th. April, 755 headed out of Damascus up the Serghaya line, which had apparently not seen any recent activity. As this was the first good weather weekend of the year, there were many cars parked close to or fouling the track. The train proceeded with much whistling and slowing down for cars, but nearing Ain Fije and rounding a sharp curve in the track, encountered a small pick-up that was reversing down the line to a parking spot. The driver of this had, fortunately, already deposited his family by the river bank, and jumped clear as the train approached. The ensuing collision overturned the truck and bent the loco's left-side running plate upwards at 45 degrees. Eventually the truck was cleared and the train got under way again. Nearer Ain Fije, new telephone cables had been installed too low across the line, but the tall chimney of 755 simply swept these aside. At Ain Fije the streets were jammed with cars. Some could be bounced off the track, but eventually the police arrived and booked car after car until the supply of parking tickets expired! However, by then the light was fading and the trip was abandoned. So, the train set back into Ain Fije station to stable overnight. Next morning, the journey resumed at 8.00, but the train got no further than some 500m beyond Deir Kanum, the present limit of operation, and rather less than half-way to Serghaya."

KANAWAT SHOPPING MALL.

According to "R.G.I." 9/04 p. 523, "Aqar Holding has awarded a US\$50M contract to Consolidated Builders to build the 60,000 sq. m. Souk al-Hedjaz shopping mall above the Hedjaz station in Damascus"!! One must assume land for development is very scarce - this will of course totally alter the appearance and layout of the Kanawat station.

(ii) JORDAN.

On Sunday 25th. April 2004 the

following locos were noted at the depot and around the station: RSH 2-8-2's 21 (or 22), and 23, Jung 2-8-2 51, HStP 2-6-2T's 62 & 63 (the latter with plates from 61), HStP 2-8-2's 71, 72; Nippon Sharyo 4-6-2's 81, 82, 85. Of these, 23 and 51 were in steam, 71 and 82 were operational, and 21 or 22, 72 and 81 were dumped. (The identities of 21/22, and 81, could not be verified and are based on deduction).

Steam Loco Safari Tours specials were run as follows:-

25th. April, morning - Amman to Qasir with 23; afternoon, Amman to Qasir with 51, the train being attacked by stone-throwing children and suffering two broken coach windows.

26th. April: morning - 82 failed with a faulty piston valve; afternoon - Qatrana to near Deba'a with 51.

27th. April: morning - Zerqa to Amman with 71; afternoon - Zerqa to Mafraq with 23.

1st. May: afternoon - Mafraq to Samra with 82.

2nd. May:- early morning, Amman to the ten-arch stone viaduct with 82.

On 26th. April the International Train to Damascus was seen to depart Amman at 08.00, diesel-hauled.

(iii). REVIVAL OF AMMAN LRT PLAN.

From "I.R.J." Oct. 2004:- "Jordan's Public Transport Regulatory Commission has revived a project for a light rail system in the capital, Amman, by calling expressions of interest by October 17. The 25.9km. line will run between Raghadan in Amman and Zarqa New Garden City.

The contract will be for a build, own, operate, transfer (BOOT) project for a standard-gauge line that will be built mainly within the existing Hedjaz Railway right-of-way between Al-Mahatta and Zarqa New Garden City. About 3km. of the line will be along King Abdulla Street to serve the transport interchange at Raghadan Terminal. The scheme goes back to the 1990's when a bidding process was started but never completed."

[This would, of course, mean the end of any narrow-gauge workings over this section of line. Ed.]

(iv). MEDINA RAILWAY MUSEUM.

From "C.R.J." 139, p. 252. "A former Syrian engine driver who had been on pilgrimage to Medina reported that a railway museum was being completed there. His photographs showed

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D.G.E.G. TOUR IN ISRAEL FOR A SECOND TIME.

By Tomas Meyer-Eppler

Back in October 1998 the DGEG (German Society For Railway History) had offered a tour to Israel. At that time, that tour caught the eye people in Israel, since it was the very first special trip for railway enthusiasts there with a special train. Because of the success of that tour, with people asking us continually to do it again, we decided to offer a second trip with a different programme.

We travelled all the railway lines of Israel (some of them in special trains), the freight lines of the Negev Desert as well as the ones on the coastline. Furthermore, we visited depots and repair workshops, and our coach programme was also focussed on the archaeology of railways.

Saturday, 16th. Oct.: The tour began with flights from Zürich (by Swiss) and from Frankfurt/Main (by Lufthansa) where we arrived with some delay between 2:45 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. at Ben-Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv. Middle-Europe and Israel shared the same time from 21 September to 30 October. We were 12 people from Germany, five from Switzerland, one from the UK, one from the USA (New York) and even one from Israel. We were welcomed by Zwi Segal, our guide and Hebrew-German/English translator, and by Menachem of E.Ron Tours, our bus driver for the following days. Hotels, flights and the bus were well organized by Palax Tours in Israel and Schechinger Tours in Germany.

The weather was wonderful, sunshine and 26 degrees Centigrade. We began with a cultural trip and went to the former Lod station of 1892, which is now without tracks and surrounded by newer buildings and used for municipal purposes. Then we went up on a hill in Jaffo where we had a splendid view towards Tel Aviv by night. Sunset was already at 5:05 p.m.

Our hotel was the Hotel Tal, 287 Hayarkon Street. It is not far away from the beach. We enjoyed a very good dinner buffet at the restaurant of the hotel at 7:30 p.m.

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several locos still present. Allegedly 2-8-0 105 (Hartmann 3465/1910) was being restored to working order for a short section of line, and 2-8-0 158 (SLM 2293/1912) was being sectioned. However, some confusion may have arisen, as 158 was originally numbered 105, and the later Hartmann 105 is supposed to have ended up in Syria. Further information would be welcome."

I. EGYPT.

Dr. Essam Abdul Aziz Ahmed Sharaf has become the new Minister of Transport in Egypt, following the death of Hamdi El-Shayeb. (RGI, 9/04, p. 529.)

Sunday, 17th Oct.: After breakfast from 7:00 a.m. our coach took us from our hotel in 25 minutes to Tel Aviv Merkaz, the central station. There we started some trips with regular trains, some of them on new lines. At 9:14 a.m. a train of German Bombardier double-deckers (first delivered in 2002) hauled by Alstom loco 755 departed from Tel Aviv Merkaz to the new station of HaRishonim where we arrived after a 28 minutes' trip via Lod. The 3km. long new line diverges just south of Beer Ya'aqov. The HaRishonim station with two platforms and two tracks 6m. over street level was opened in September 2003 and is very well styled. In the future this line will be prolonged to Bat Yam and Tel Aviv Darom (South). The station of Beer Ya'aqov itself was opened in November 1999

We then went by coach to Rehovot on the Lod-Ashdod line. A D/D train pushed by loco 756 brought us in 23 minutes to Tel Aviv HaHagana where we arrived at 11:01 a.m. The D/Ds are so similar to the German ones that one could feel one was riding in Germany, even the good condition of the track is similar. But there are more seats on the IR D/Ds and they are even more comfortable and the air-conditioning works much better than the very simple system on the German D/Ds does. The driving coaches are different from the German ones with their big engine-generator cubicle. But they are not more noisy than the other coaches. There are now 92 of these coaches and 36 Alstom four-axle locos (numbers 731 – 766).

HaHagana is also a new station, opened in June 2002. Now it is again under construction: a third track will be added in near future as part of the amelioration of the Ayalon line. Then followed a trip on the partly-reopened Jerusalem line to Bet Shemesh, again by D/Ds. Our loco was the 747. During the 32 minutes' stay there we had a meeting with Sybil Ehrlich who lives in that town. She gave us some information for our next visits.

The same train, now pushed, brought us back to Tel Aviv at 12:46 p.m. Our coach waited for us at the Central Station (Merkaz) and took us to the Eretz-Israel-Museum in the North of Tel Aviv. That has a small railway section with a British R & H loco (305317 / 1950, ex Neshet Co in Bet Shemesh), the German Deutz loco 57062 / 1959 (IR 202) and a driving trailer of the once-famous German Esslingen express railcar. Unfortunately the latter was in a very bad condition. There was also a restaurant on the exhibition site.

Our coach took us back to the Merkaz station, and we left it at 3:56 p. m. by D/Ds again and pushed by loco 759 to Kfar Sava in the Northeast, where there also is a new station since 2003, very similar to that in HaRishonim. Then our coach went to

a Kfar Sava playground where there is the diesel-loco, No. 223 made by Maschinenfabrik Esslingen in 1957 and which is very similar to the German V 60 series. After this visit we went via the motorway to our hotel at Tel Aviv.

Monday, 18th. Oct.: Our coach took us from our hotel to Tel Aviv Merkaz, where the IC to Haifa Merkaz departed at 8:42. Before boarding a platform every passenger has to pass a security checkpoint and then the automatic barrier where his ticket becomes validated. Also it is not possible to leave the platform without passing the automatic barrier. This system exists at every station.

We had a group ticket for this "long distance" train. So each member of the group had to pass behind the other. The day before we had individual tickets of a slightly reduced fare for everyone.

Tel Aviv Merkaz has actually two platforms with four tracks in the middle of the motorway beside the river Ayalon. A third island platform is under construction. Our D/D train was pushed by loco 757. We had arranged a visit of the Haifa railway museum and therefore were allowed to stay on the train till the Haifa East yard which is adjacent to the museum. After the demolition of an old building for road works the main part of the museum is now in the reconstructed loco shed of the Hedjaz Railway, built in 1903. We left the D/D coach by a set of transportable stairs and were welcomed by Paul Cotterell. He gave us a lot of information about the railway history in Palestine and Israel. All the museum's vehicles are now very properly arranged inside and outside the museum. We could take a lot of pictures and could even see the Spanish-built shunting loco 261 coming from the harbour branch.

Before we continued our journey we had the opportunity to buy some felafel and something to drink at a kiosk near the museum.

Approx. 12:30 p.m. was the departure time of an IC train to Nahariyya that made a special stop at the museum. The IC consisted of the three Danish made IC-3-units 39 + 20 + 01. Just 35 minutes later we arrived at Nahariyya where there is now a modernised station with two platforms. The line further north to Bezet and (in earlier times) to Beirut seems now to be out of use.

Our coach took us to the Rosh Hanikra rock at the border of the Lebanon where we had a beautiful view down to the former terrace of the Beirut-bound railway line (and to the Lebanon itself). The track has now disappeared and is substituted by a paved road for military purposes. Fortunately the barrier at the beginning of the narrow track was opened and we went by bus to the first of the three Rosh Hanikra tunnels.

On the way back to Haifa by bus we had an opportunity to take pictures of trains at three different sites at the railway line

Nahariyya - Haifa. Then we went further to Haifa, caught a view of the Bahai Gardens and stopped at the valley station of the funicular railway. The "Carmelit", which was constructed to French plans, was opened after three years of construction in October 1959. With six stops it can take you from sea level to the residential area of Karmel which is more than 300 m higher. From 1986 to 1992 this railway was not in service due to reconstruction.

The line is completely underground in a tunnel which is 1803 m long. It is a single-track line that has a passing loop in the middle. Speed will be up to 30 km/h which meant that we travelled for about six minutes. Uphill we had an excellent view of the illuminated Haifa after a short walk. There were only some steps necessary from the panorama site to our Hotel Nof (101 Hanassi Ave.). The restaurant served us a very good Chinese styled dinner.

Tuesday, 19th Oct.: After breakfast at 7:30 a.m. our coach took us to the terrace of the former "Valley" railway that was a branch of the Hedjaz Railway connecting Haifa and Damascus until 1946. Paul Cotterell informed us about all the details to see. Furthermore Sybil Ehrlich took part and brought with her an interesting documentation about the Jafo-Jerusalem line which in the beginning also was a narrow gauge railway.

First point of interest was the railway bridge over the river Qishon about 10 km southeast of Haifa Central. It seemed to be refurbished, there was new ballast and the track relaid on it. It seems that there is some local interest in bringing back the past times. Sleepers show the manufacturing year 1908, and the rails Cockerill 1903.

El Roy, the second point, was a little halt near Bet Zayd which saw something like commuter trains for a couple of years from about 1938. The small building is freshly painted, there is new gravel around it, and there are two standard gauge wagons, not adapted to 1050mm but placed on two short pieces of third rail.

Qiryat Haroshet once was only a halt also. You can now find there something which looks like an American steam loco. It was once made for a movie.

From time to time we could see small bridges not far away from the road, sometimes still with the track on it.

A surprise was the station of Kefar Yehoshua which is now used for touristic purposes especially for young people. The station itself and a smaller building are wonderful renovated.

The watertank and another building are cleaned and therefore fine monuments of the past. There are also five freight wagons but in a state as they were found some years ago.

The city of Afula, our next stop, has used the station building, the freight shed and the whole station area for purposes of the municipality for several years. It must be mentioned that the station building is a representative one. There are no more tracks

to see but the water tower still exists. The distance from Haifa to Afula was 36 km by railway. On the following 20 km there is not much to see except some embankments.

The next city we arrived at was Bet She'an where the station was erected at the behest of the sultan far away from the centre of the then-small village. Water tower and freight shed are rather intact, the latter without roof. The original station building doesn't exist any more. Instead of that the British had erected a more modern building using the same stone, but it is now a ruin also. Some tracks are still there.

At noon we arrived at Gesher (= bridge). With its 247m. below sea level the Jisr el Mejami railway station was originally the lowest overground station in the world. Nothing remained of it. Of more interest today is the bridge from the west side of the River Jordan to the east side where today is the Kingdom of Jordan.

Nearby there is a touristic site called Old Gesher which has since several months ago owned a War Department Light Railway loco made by Hunslet in 1917 (factory number 1265). The 60cm. gauge 4-6-0T loco was in France in WW1 and from 1928 was employed in building the Rutenberg Hydro-Electric Power Station at Naharayim north of Gesher and today mainly in Jordan. There the remains were found. Following the signing of the formal peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994 the remains of the loco were extricated in bits and pieces. Its WDLR number was 353, its Palestine Electric Corporation (PEC) number was H7.

The loco was restored, missing items replaced (boiler, chimney) and fitted with a diesel engine by Kibbutz En Shemer. The loco now operates for visitors from time to time with a train of five side-tip wagons over a short length of track alongside the River Jordan.

After a lunch break at Yardenit on the Jordan River where it leaves the Sea of Galilee our trip took us along the Jordanian border in the Yarmuk gorge. We followed the border fence till the station of El Hamma, the last station in what was once Palestine. Today it is used as a farm house.

But before arriving there we made a stop at the Zemah station with its impressive ruins on the foot of the Golan heights. The bridges over the Yarmuk, or their ruins which can be seen from the road must be mentioned also.

It was a very hot day, with a maximum temperature of approx. 35 centigrades. Before returning to Haifa we had the opportunity to visit a diamond polishing factory in Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee. Polished dia-

Photo halt - the special with 603 overtaken by a freight train hauled by 614 at Nevatim loop.



monds are one of the main export goods of Israel.

Wednesday, 20th Oct.: The next day our coach took us to visit the repair workshop of Qishon. It is situated north of Haifa adjacent to the new Hutzot Hamifratz station and was established in 1932 by Palestine Railways. Now they are dealing with the IC-3 units, diesel locos and coaches. Interesting were a four-axle steam-loco tender, two coaches of a burned-out IC3 (7019), four ex-Palestine Railways coaches without bogies which are preserved – I hope – for the railway museum as well as four different IR coaches of the fifties and sixties. In the scrap yard there were also locos 104, 109, 221, 127, 128, 251, and the VS 3 Esslingen driving coach.

We left the workshop at 10:20 a.m. by bus and followed the railway line till Haifa Hof Ha-Carmel, a new station adjacent to the southern Haifa bus terminal and to the beach. There we had the opportunity to take pictures of the passing trains with different backgrounds, either the sea or the Mount Carmel.

At 1:40 p.m. we arrived at the Kibbutz En Shemer east of Pardes-Hanna where they served us a lovely lunch in the shadow of a very big tree. After that we visited the "Old Courtyard Museum" and saw a film of the 80 year history of the Kibbutz. Then we went to their "station" and had a trip on the narrow gauge railway that was built with their own resources. The railway line has a length of 1500 m and the gauge is 600 mm. Some of the rails date from 1916 made in Illinois. The loco is a Ruston LBT made in 1959 (factory number 432660) which is equipped with a false boiler and chimney so that looks a little a steam loco.

After the trip they showed us their tractor museum and their workshop where there was also another loco under repair: a two-axle Deutz mining loco.

We left this friendly place at 4:15 p.m. and went to Jerusalem via Modi'in. We could see that there is a railway line under construction from Tel Aviv to Modi'in.

We arrived at the capital city of Israel which has 620.000 inhabitants, in darkness. With only 17 centigrades it was very cold there. Our hotel was the Ramat Rachel, situated in a height of 820 m over sea level where there was a good view to Bethlehem in the Palestinian Autonomous Area. We had dinner in a very big and noisy dining hall.

Thursday, 21th. Oct.: We spent the whole day in Jerusalem. First of all, our coach took us to the the former railway station which was closed in July 1998. Since then, the two biggest cities of Israel, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (400.000 inhabitants), 60km of distance between them, are not connected any more by rail. All tracks in the platform area are removed, but all the semaphore signals near the signal box are still on their place.

As a remembrance of the railway transport of these times there are still two sections of German Esslingen express diesel units that we saw during the day (the first one: VT 9, the other one: VS * [unknown]).

Furthermore we visited the Great Synagogue, went from the Mount of Olives via the Via Dolorosa to the Garden of Gethsemane, then to the Wailing Wall, the old town centre, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. After the lunch break we also went to visit a new railway station that is still under construction in the southern suburb Malcha and construction sites of the modern tram.

From 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. we had coffee and talks with Ludwig Schneider at his place near the railway line which is now out of use. He is the publisher of "News from Israel" and numerous books on Israel.

Friday, 22th. Oct.: After breakfast our coach took us to Lod. We were booked for a depot visit there. But because it was a Friday nonoe of those in authority were working, and so we had to wait nearly an hour till we were allowed to visit the site where there were some IC-3 and D/D units and several four-axle Alstom locos.

We left Lod by IC at 11.13 a.m. for Beersheva. Our train, which was the last before the beginning of Shabbat, consisted of the IC-3 units 31 + 13 + 16 + 34. We arrived at Beer Sheva Merkaz, the new central station, 66 minutes later. This very interestingly styled station was opened in September 2000 and marked the beginning of the era of new stations in Israel. The old station, opened in 1965 and now called Beer Sheva Tzafon (North), is far away from the city centre and was never accepted by people. The single platform station will be substituted by the new university station several hundred metres north of it in the near fu-



The first passenger train to call at the rebuilt Dimona

ture.

We took a tour of the city, visited the old Turkish railway bridge which is partly destroyed and also the former railway station which dates back to 1915. This is now surrounded by skyscrapers and seems to have a good future, maybe as museum. We stayed overnight at the Hotel Desert Inn at Beersheva, which gave us the impression of some neglect though it has a fine green garden and two big swimming pools.

Before dinner we celebrated the beginning of Shabbat with praying, singing and breaking bread.

Saturday, 23th. Oct.: On a Sabbath there are no trains in Israel and nearly no public transport is available. However, transport by private coaches and cars is allowed. Therefore we made a trip to the remains of the former British and Turkish railway lines around Beer Sheva. Our companion was the specialist Dan Gazit.

We left the hotel by a special 4WD MAN desert bus at 7:45 a.m. It took us to the remains of the 1917 British-built 60km. long standard-gauge line from Rafa (Rafiah) to Beer Sheva, which was in service till July 1927.

The line was parallel to the today's main road 25 for approx. 10 km to the north-west from Beer Sheva. Then it diverged to the west, which we also did with our bus.

Shortly before that we saw a five-arched stone bridge. After the closure of the railway line it was used as a road bridge. Later (in 1948) the bridge was blown and a pier destroyed. Rebuilt again, it is used now for supporting a water pipeline.

Most impressive the nearly-totally-intact steel bridge of 110 m length near Ofakim. It was built upon seven pairs of steel cylinders as pillars. The movement of the steel construction in the sun light could clearly be heard from time to time as it was becoming warmer now!

Some kilometres more to the west what remained of a platform could be seen. It was used for unloading (and loading) when the line not yet had reached Beer Sheva.

At that time the British forces had begun to construct a second line which diverged at a point west of the Besor Valley which went more to the south. But that was never finished, especially not the bridge over the Besor. Instead we could see parts of the embankment in the desert.

In contrast, the completed line from Rafa to Beer Sheva crossed the Besor by a modern bridge. As a relic of that time a short piece of this bridge is rebuilt and accessible also by a "normal" car from the main road no. 241. As it is now a tourist site some metres of track are now relaid.

At noon we arrived at the Kibbutz Gevulot where a meal was offered to us.

Later in the afternoon we had a look to the embankments of the British narrow gauge line near Re'eim and the Turkish narrow gauge main line to Beer Sheva north of Tifrah. Half an hour after sunset we returned at our hotel.

Sunday, 24th Oct.: After breakfast at 7:00 a.m. our coach took us to the Beer Sheva North station. Israel Railways had offered us a special train. We left Beer Sheva Tzafon at 8:00 a.m. by a train consisting of 1230 kW strong loco 125 (GM type G12 made in 1966, factory number 31689), the Yugoslavian-built mixed generator seating coach 610 (originally built in 1964) and the 1972-built Yugoslavian coach 643. Both are equipped with air conditioning. But it was possible to open the windows of the first coach, so there was always a proper climate whereas the other coach more resembled a



G12 Bo-Bo at Beer Sheva Merkaz

huge refrigerator! Nevertheless the ride was comfortable because both coaches have a width of more than 3 meters.

We were accompanied by Yaron Dozetas who held the contact between the loco drivers and us.

First of all we went on the new line to the Dangerous Waste depot at Ramat Hovav. This line was opened in April 2004. After reversal we went via Beer Sheva Tzafon, Qiryat Gat Hadascha and the Shiqma Junction on a freight-only line parallel to the coast to Ashqelon and via the Pleshet Junction to Namal Ashdod (port of Ashdod). Unfortunately we could not do the trip on the branch line of the Rutenberg power station as originally planned. While creating the schedule for the special train, IR had forgotten that the connection had been partially dismantled in 2001.

After taking pictures of locos 124, 161, 601, 608 (rebuilt after an accident), 611, 701 (!), 703, and 707 in the yard adjacent to the harbour (which itself is a closed area) we travelled via another side of the Pleshet Junction triangle to Ashdod and then to Lod. After a short stop there for buying food and drinks at the platform kiosk we went via the Ayalon line to Tel Aviv, left the main line to Haifa in Tel Aviv University station and ran to Bene Berak. There we had to wait in the freight yard for two service trains because this renovated line is actually single track.

Other than on Sunday, we left the new line east of Petah Tikva-Sgula and joined the old Tel Aviv bypass line. We had a crossing with a freight train hauled by loco 601 in the modernised Rosh Ha-Ayin station, which was only used as a passenger station from spring 2001 to spring 2003. We proceeded on the now freight-only line straight to Lod and then to Ashdod Ad-Halom. We passed again through the Ashqelon station, which will become passenger station next year. Two platforms for four tracks were under construction. We had a last photostop at Shiqma Junction, from where it was once possible to proceed to Gaza and the Suez Canal. The trip ended in Beer Sheva Merkaz at 5:10 p.m.

Yaron Dozetas told me that we made several records on that day: The first passenger train in Ramat Hovav, the first passenger train with a G12 in Beer Sheva Merkaz, the first passenger train hauled by a G12 in Lod and Tel Aviv for a long time, and first passenger train in the Rosh Ha-Ayin - Lod line, since it was relaid!

Monday, 25th Oct.: This was the first day which was quite a little cloudy. Nevertheless sunrise was visible at 6.30 a.m. and sunset at 5 p.m. Maximum temperature was 29 degrees Centigrade. We had the same coaches as on the day before when we started at Beer Sheva Tzafon, but the loco (IR number 603, factory number 713286) was a big GM GT 26CW type made in 1974 with six axles and 1640 kW.

For the desert trip our train took us across Nevatim, where we passed a waiting freight train hauled by 614. to Dimona, where we visited the depot. There were the following locos outside: 609, 614, and 708. Inside we found: 605, 709, and in the freight

yard attached to a train: 702.

After a long stay and discussions (approx. 2 hours) because there was no Guard on board we proceeded without a Guard to Tzefa on a railway line that is normally used for freight trains only. We went across a new connecting curve (as the first ever passenger train) on the other branch line to Nahal Tzin. In Tzefa potash is collected from the Dead Sea and there is a phosphorus mine in Har Tzin.

Unfortunately we were not allowed to leave the train, neither in Nahal Tzin nor on the line to Oron where the Desert is very mountainous, though there was no freight train waiting for us. Nevertheless we could take pictures of the locos 610 and 701 in Nahal Tzin and of two freight trains in Tzefa hauled by 125 (!) and 708.

We left the train in Dimona, where there is a new passenger station under construction and proceeded by bus, so that we could take some pictures of the special train and of another freight train. We stayed overnight in Tel Aviv in the same hotel as on the first days.

Tuesday, 26th Oct.: We left the hotel by bus at 8:30 a. m. At first we went to Jafo where we took pictures of the old station of the Jaffa-Jerusalem narrow gauge line. Unfortunately it is in a very derelict state because it was used for military purposes for very many years. Then our trip took us to the site of historical diesel loco 211 (Esslingen 5145 / 1955). It was not easy to find it, because it is a monument adjacent to the once National Transport Institute in Jafo. But Sybil Ehrlich was able to describe the complicated way of getting there. The building at the corner of Hazerem and Hatechiya Streets today lodges offices of the Municipality. 211 was made by Maschinenfabrik Esslingen in 1955.

Then our coach took us to the Tel Aviv HaShalom station where we joined a train (D/Ds hauled by loco 743) to the Ben-Gurion airport via a new line which was opened two weeks ago on 10th October. We passed through the first IR tunnel on this line, which is situated between the junction and the airport! But the line's terminus is integrated in the new airport Terminal no. 3 which was not ready for airline service on that date. So we had to proceed by bus to the old airport terminal. The new railway line leaves the mainline from Tel Aviv to Lod at Shapirim Junction and has a length of 7.5 km. Actually it is only single track but it is prepared for a second track.

Those who had booked on Lufthansa had a good flight to Frankfurt / Main where the Jumbo arrived on time at 7:55 p.m. Lufthansa again served a very good meal.

We left Israel with good impressions: a modern state with a modern railway, punctual and clean trains, very clean stations and everywhere comfortable high platforms.

67:9

NABLUS QUERIES.

By Paul Cotterell.

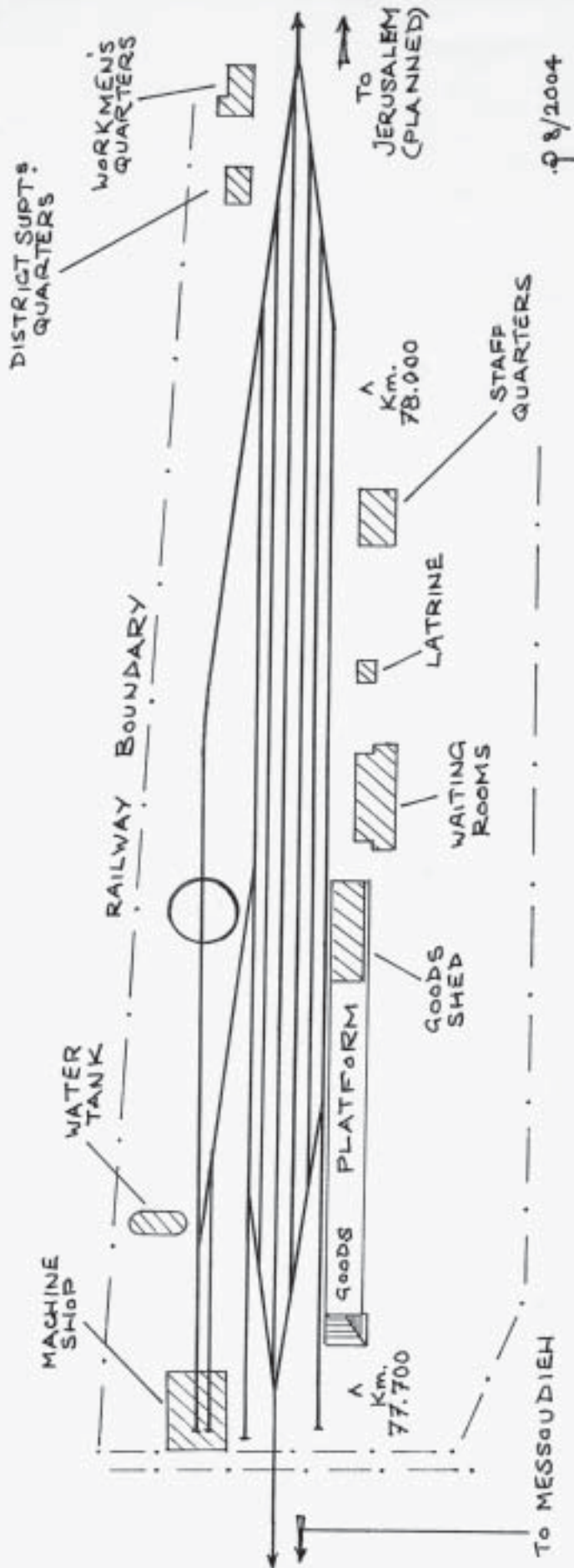
There are plenty of basic questions still to be answered about the history of railways in Palestine and Israel. Not surprisingly, many of these concern the periods of war and its aftermath; the years of transition when new administrations were set up in the whole, or parts, of The Land. One query that has always been at the back of my mind is to do with the section of line between Messoudieh and Nablus, the genesis of which remains exceptionally vague. Did the Turks manage to complete (or even begin) the laying of track in WW1 or was it the British who did the job? It seems, based on the evidence of just one (!) photo which appears on page 64 of 'Hedjaz Railway', that the British may have put the finishing touches to the Nablus line, but nothing has been found to indicate accurately when and by whom the branch was actually built. Tourret (p.34) noted that 'Earthworks had been [1914] constructed into Nablus itself, but no rails laid'. On page 84 he stated that 'The line... was found by the British to have been lifted by the Turks. It was replaced in 1920'. I do not know what Rick's sources were for these statements. They do not sit easily together and perhaps partially contradict each other. I can offer no concrete suggestion to clear up such doubts, though, at the risk of maybe clouding the issue still further, can present a finding made in the IRM Archives. Since so little is known of the line it seems worthwhile to include this too.

File 123.2/11 was opened in July 1922 and deals with 'Railway Boundaries at Nablus' - mostly disputes between PR and the Municipality, other local landowners, and even cases of repeated trespass. The file contains a blueprint of a tracing made by B. A. Davis and dated 24/1/1922. Mr. Davis made a note on the tracing (drawing No. S15) that it was a true copy of a CFH plan, and this was endorsed by Chief Engineer Scrivener. Comparison with the 1927 plan of Nablus station in 29:11 shows this Chemin de Fer du Hedjaz drawing to include several more loops and sidings in the area between the station buildings on the south side and the turntable on the north side, and the general layout is also different in certain other respects. Most noticeable is a siding leading off from the turntable to run past the water tank and end up in what appears to be a two-road loco shed but is shown on the plan as a machine shop.

No date is given for the original CFH plan. However, the Chemin de Fer du Hedjaz was set up by the French in Syria following World War 1, and had nothing to do with running the Hedjaz lines in Palestine which, of course, were operated by the British. It seems logical, therefore, to suppose that the CFH plan was taken from an original Turkish drawing. Assuming this to be so, then my conclusion is that the unknown Turkish plan (on which drawing S15 is based), with all the extra lines and machine shop etc., was the pre-WW1 PROPOSED layout at Nablus station and, since the line is shown as extending beyond station limits towards Jerusalem, it is evident that draw-

NABLUS STATION

AS PER DRAWING S15
TRACED FROM CFH PRINT.



ing S15 shows Nablus station as it would have been had the Turks been able to build the line through to Jerusalem as originally planned. The near contemporary photo in 'Hedjaz Railway' appears to show a fairly simple terminal layout, comparable to that reproduced in 29:11, rather than the more extensive through station layout in drawing S15. Nevertheless, it is not impertinent to wonder why the CFH would bother to draw a plan of a station that was entirely outside their jurisdiction. And we're still no closer to learning when the Nablus line was laid and by whom. A tentative working hypothesis points to both the Turks and British taking a hand in building it.

Incidentally, careful comparison of that photo in 'Hedjaz Railway' with drawing S15 and that in 29:11 indicates that it was taken looking approximately south, which means the mountain in the background is Mount Gerizim (see Deuteronomy 11:29-30, 27:11 - 13 and Joshua 8:28-35.)

[Ed. adds: Of course, it could be that the drawing was indeed simply found in the papers taken over by the new CFH, and loaned to the new PR for copying as it would be more relevant to them.]

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Tracklaying at Bar Gyorra Station 2004

