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הרכבת

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71:01 Nodding Donkeys! The Class 141 two-car four-wheel Raibuses built by BREL and based on a Leyland National bus were, shall we say, somewhat primitive by British standards, but served in the West Yorkshire area for some years (as did the Editor). Then they were sold to, of all places, Iran... Here three units are seen at Tehran depot on 9th. October 2005. They are used only sparingly as they are classed as unreliable - the two on the right have therefore been given a heavy overhaul and new livery; that on the left retains its WYPTE red/cream livery. Quite a way from Castleford!

(Photo: Tomas Meyer-Eppler.)



EDITORIAL

The last issue was so full that something had to be left out, and so the rubric 'Other Middle East Railways' did not appear. We make up for that in this issue with a rather lengthy section, and also a rather lengthy 'Notes and Comments' section in which various historical themes are handled briefly. The initial comments on Uri Ben-Rehav's suggestion that older articles be repeated were negative - and understandably so, inasmuch as there is still so much on file, and back numbers are available in many libraries and archives for those who seek them! Another solution remains for someone to scan (and then correct where necessary) older issues onto a website - something the Editor himself is unable to do, but would welcome. The Editor is now facing even more turmoil in his professional life, and has a daughter at university to support - which rather eats into the little spare time and even smaller spare cash that has until now supported and subsidised 'Harakevet' - It would be nice to get another fifty or so paying subscribers, to reduce the loss that we make, and if readers know of any potential subscribers, we'd be grateful if you could drop a heavy hint! Steve Waldenberg would be pleased to send on details and we have a lot of back numbers still available.

Enjoy!

The Editor.

71:04.

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). NEW I.R. GENERAL MANAGER.

"Ha'aretz" 05.09.05 reported that Ofer Linchevski was confirmed as General Manager of Israel Railways. He was previously the Deputy General Manager (Finance) of Egged.

(b). MUSEUM NEWS. Mixed news here:- (i). MORE THIEVERY.

In early September an attempt was made to steal an old six-wheel tank wagon (see Fig. 114 in "Railways of Palestine and Israel") from the unguarded dump at Tel Hanan. This tank wagon, No.4145, and intended for the museum, had been loaded aboard the 120-ton capacity steel well wagon No.1500/1145 (see Fig. 102 in the same book). The initial attempt to steal the tank wagon was thwarted when the thieves were disturbed, and the vehicle was apparently dropped in mid-air. Harel Even happened to pass by the following day and reported his suspicions to the museum. A rescue effort was launched a few days later and a lorry despatched to site, but the tank wagon was no longer there. The thieves had returned in the meantime.



71:03. ARC General Electric U20C A1A-A1A No. 315, coupled to 314, at the depot at Aqaba. 22. July 1998. (Photo: John L. Alexander.)

The 120-ton well wagon was left behind by the thieves, but was obviously in danger as well. At least it would have to be cut up on the spot as it would probably take a military exercise to remove it by road, and this may prove sufficient deterrence. This is the main reason that it has not been installed in the museum already. There is no longer rail access to the Tel Hanan dump so the well wagon was left.

A later report, on 18.11.2005:-

(ii). LATEST MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS.

The 120-ton capacity well wagon (numbered 1145/5000 in the old and new IR Engineering Department numbering series), which had languished at Tel Hanan sidings for many years, arrived at the IRM in the morning of 18.11.05. This was a major operation, involving road transport, as the railway line from Gesher Paz/Km 2 has long been out of use and is now impassable in places. The move, carried out speedily and smoothly by the "Tavura" haulage company, was prompted by the recent spate of thefts of redundant railway material (scrap metal presently commanding a high price), and also by the need to complete it before the winter rains made the site at Tel Hanan an impossible quagmire. Once the approach to the wagon at Tel Hanan had been cleared, it was lifted on to a road trailer by two cranes. Following a somewhat circuitous road journey, unloading at the entrance to the Museum compound was easily achieved apart from a last minute hitch (of course, of course!). As can be seen from Fig. 102 in 'The Railways of Palestine & Israel' the well wagon has double bogies to spread the weight. These bogies swivel independently and it was the devil of a job to get them all sitting on the slightly curved track at the same time. Eventually, after much to-ing and fro-ing, everything was nicely settled and the wagon pushed into the Museum compound.

It may be noted here, incidentally, that this well wagon was the very first piece of rolling stock bought by the newly-formed Israel Railways especially for the transport of large and heavy transformers belonging to the Israel Electric Corporation. It seems

to have only been used a few times at most for this purpose with hardly any subsequent use. I am told by a reliable source that he saw it in a freight train, apparently heading for Lod, sometime in the late 1980s. This appears to be the last time it was used, and thereafter it was simply dumped. The wagon is now minus all but one of its original side stanchions and has also lost its buffers (possibly to scrap metal thieves?). It is a useless great lump, weighing about 50 tons and occupying 24 metres of track, and will undoubtedly create plenty of headaches in the future when it has to be moved around. But its historical significance was sufficient to ensure its continued survival. The wagon still has two maker's plates attached. These were made from a cheap and nasty metal (aluminium?) and one of the plates is broken. Nevertheless it is still easy to make out that the wagon was built by Sté. Ame des Ateliers de Construction de et a Familleureux (Belgique). There is no date discernible." (P.C.)

(iii). TENDER.

At 12.15 on 22.11.05 T44 No. 131 arrived at the IRM with one of the old Palestine Railways P Class 4-6-0 tenders that had lain dumped at Qishon Works for long decades. The tender once belonged to engine No.62 and was used for other purposes for a while after the locomotive itself had been scrapped. A second P Class tender, from No.60, remains at Qishon Works. It is loaded with concrete weights and still used very occasionally for testing cranes. (P.C.)

(iv). AND ANOTHER MUSEUM ACQUISITION!

One of the Qishon Works shunting tractors was brought by road for installation at the IRM in the early afternoon of 20.11.05. This is 'International 84 hydro' according to the labelling carried. The tractor is not in working order but the Museum manager has hopes of refurbishing it into serviceable condition to provide a short ride hauling children on a train of flats. (P.C.)

(c). SCANDALOUS SCRAPPINGS.

At the end of September 2005 two long-dumped diesels were scrapped, caus-

ing something of a local outcry. The locos concerned were SAFB 103, and Esslingen 0-6-0DH 221. These were the last of their respective classes left on IR. The main future surrounded the Belgian-built 101 and 103, which were of a unique type of which there were just three examples built in 1951. A previous IR General Manager had ordered that they not be scrapped but retained for possible preservation by any interested outside body. No such body ever came forward to make a serious preservation attempt. Presumably the order not to scrap them was rescinded, though it is not known why or by whom. Last-ditch efforts to save 101, the pioneer diesel on IR, were being made by Chen Melling and a small group of activists. It should be noted that an example of both types of loco (Nos. 102 and 212) is preserved in the Israel Railway Museum.

A short illustrated article in 'Yediot Ahronot' of 14.10.05 announced that SAFB 101 had now indeed been saved from scrapping following a concerted campaign by enthusiasts, among whom Chen Melling, Yaron Dozet, Evyatar Reiter and Benny Haspel took leading parts. IR management had been inundated by e-mails, phone calls and letters until the new General Manager agreed that the loco was of sufficient historical value to be saved. It was still to be decided what exactly to do with 101.

(d). JERUSALEM LINE WORKS.

The line from Bet Shemesh to Jerusalem was closed to public service on Fridays for two months between 07.09.05 to 11.11.05. This was to allow engineering work over a 6 kilometre section to eradicate a speed restriction.

(e). BEERSHEBA UNIVERSITY STATION.

Beersheba North (University) opened on Saturday evening 24.09.05. Sybil Ehrlich wrote on 25/09:- "The new station at Beersheba North/University opened last night and I went to see it today. It is a very short distance north of the old station, and is far from being finished. There will eventually be four platforms. Only numbers 3 and 4 - on the east side of the station - are currently in use. The escalators and elevators/lifts are not working yet. The maps inside the trains show FIVE new stations to be opened in 2006, but this isn't exactly true. Dimona will open at the end of this year. Trains to Dimona will run from Beersheba North - a shuttle service (this line is shown in a different colour on the map). There will be no triangle in Beersheba. According to the map, trains on the Ashkelon line will continue to Sderot. (Benny Naor said eventually to Ofakim, which is not shown on the map - he said he hasn't seen the maps, yet he is the Israel Railways spokesman!)

The map also shows the line to Ben-Gurion Airport extended to Pa'atey Modi'in (Modi'in Outskirts) and Modi'in Merkaz (Modi'in Central). This is due to open in 2007. I saw Pa'atey Modi'in a few weeks ago and it looks rather nice, with two side platforms. Modi'in Merkaz isn't visible from ground level - I think it is underground. I

found the place where it is supposed to be, and it is indeed a construction site, but there is nothing that actually looks like a station.

The other new station shown on the map is Kfar Saba Merkaz, after (west of) Kfar Saba - Hod Hasharon.

Incidentally - My train from Beit Shemesh this morning left unusually from Platform 2 because of a delay to the Jerusalem-bound train, so the trains crossed in Beit Shemesh instead of Bar Giora. Then when I came back in the afternoon the train stopped at Platform 3!!! I managed to take a photo of the IC3 train together with Platform 3 sign. There was another train in Platform 1, which the stationmaster told me had been stuck there for several hours, having broken down."

From Aharon Gazit comes the more formal announcement:- "On 21.09.2005, three important transportation events took place:

Israel Railways Ltd.: In a press release from the Railways' Directorate Chairman Mr. Moshe Leon, informed the people of Northern Beer-Sheva, and particularly its students, that they will at last enjoy services at the new University station to be opened on Saturday night 24.09.2005.

This station replaces the older one dating from 1956, which, despite some improvements made several years ago, remained inadequate; the new one has been built at a cost of \$13.5 million, has an area of 700 sq. m. and 2 platforms of 300 m each.

Although opened (without a ceremony), it is quite far from being completed."

(f). NEW RAILWAY WORKS OPENED.

From a press release of 21.09.2005 by RAMTA & IAI (Israel Aircraft Industries): "RAMTA at Beer-Sheva, the IAI in general (including myself as one of the IAI employees A.G.), and also the railways have good reason to celebrate: the new workshops for assembling and manufacturing double-deck trains for Israel Railways has been officially opened to-day!

The works, which cost \$10 million, have an area of 12,000 sq. m. of which 8000 sq. m. are under a roof, with tracks connecting it to the nearby Israel Railways main line to Beer-Sheva University station, as well as Beer-Sheva Central station, and thus to the whole network.

The plant is already fully occupied; Several weeks ago, work started on assembling the 54 double-deck coaches, the last of which is expected to be handed over in about a year from now. (During the visit after the ceremony, there were 5 coaches - including one power car/driving trailer - in the hangar at various stages of assembly; one trailer car was displayed outside as a background, A.G.).

RAMTA's share in the project is \$17 million, whilst during the last decade, RAMTA has received orders for railway vehicles - mainly 39 IC3 dmus, but also the manufacturing of components for 39 double-deck coaches supplied to Israel Railways between 1999 and 2004, totalling \$53 Million.

On 24.05.05, during the visit of the President of Bombardier Transportation Mr. Andre Navarri, the contract for co-operation between Bombardier Transportation and Ramta for common production of 86 single-deck passenger coaches was signed; it refers to the tender of Israel Railways for supply of 86 coaches, including driving trailers/power cars with an option for up to 500 coaches; (of course this contract can only be realized if Bombardier wins the tender). The contract for the 86 coaches is worth \$145 million and RAMTA's share will be \$50 million; If the option is also realized, the local share will reach \$200 million.

The first greeter was IAI's General Manager Mr. Moshe Keret who put the emphasis on strengthening industry and employment in the Negev (the southern half of Israel which is largely a desert), in addition to this being a further development of the plant.

Bombardier Transportation Vice-President Mr. Stefan Krenz said: "Bombardier sees Israel as an important and strategic market and has written on her banner tight cooperation with Israel Railways and local industries, to provide and supply the most advanced trains for the welfare of the passengers. This is also the reason that we are the only international player in trains production which has an Israeli representative for carriage manufacturing (he meant that RAMTA is the only plant in the world outside Goerlitz of Germany, where double-deck trains can be manufactured under license! A.G.). All this in order to develop the railways' infrastructure and to provide an uncompromised service for Israel Railways".

Finally, the General Manager of RAMTA, Mr Nathan Gallily, said: "This sort of work at the modern and well equipped plant will create 100 new jobs both at RAMTA and at the sub-contractors integrated in the project; All of them are located at the Negev area which suffers from unemployment; The new plant will also enable acceptance of contracts for very big works in Israel; RAMTA currently has cooperation agreements with 11 Israeli companies supplying components and work as subcontractors and the aim is towards yet more companies entering the co-operation".

Bombardier Transportation distributed a brochure regarding its bid for the single-deck coaches tender. Siemens has also made a bid for the tender.

(g). PALESTINE TRANSPORT CO-OPERATION.

The third event which took place on 21.09.05 was the signing of a contract between Israeli and Palestinian Transport Ministries to create a common Ministry; it will cost \$3 Million and is financed by the EU.

Regarding the railways, the project raised is the building of a line from Haifa to the West Bank, or between Gaza and Ashdod.

The Israeli Transport Minister Mr. Meir Shitrit, said that proper projects must be found as soon as possible, in order to enable the introduction of an agreed plan for the first project at the EU conference which will take place in Morocco in November 2005.

(h). ELECTRIFICATION TENDERS.

Siemens of Germany and C.R.C.C. will compete together on Israel Railways' \$263 Million electrification tender; The two companies are already competing on the Tel-Aviv LRV/METRO tender, and intend to compete also on building the line to Eilat on the Red Sea, should it be realized.

(i). BUFFER STOPS.

Balfour Beatty has recently won the Israel Railways tender for supply of 20 to 25 buffer stops; the rate of supply is 5 annually, and there is an option for extending the contract still further; each unit price is \$16,000, bringing the present deal to a total of \$400,000. This is the first time that the German firm Rawie, which has been dominant so far in this market since 1954, has lost the market, at least for the next 5 years!

(j). COLLISION INVESTIGATION CONCLUSIONS.

From a press release of 10.10.2005 by the Israeli Police: "The Police have completed the investigation of the collision between a train and a lorry which happened at the end of June on the line to Beer-Sheva, in which 7 people died and more than 200 were injured. They came to the conclusion that two senior Israel Railways officers - the Deputy General Manager for Infrastructures, Engineer Eliya Volkov, and the Head of Track Department, Chief Engineer Sorin Shayowitz, together with the two owners of the lorry company, the brothers Yakhya and Rafael Eliyahu, should be charged with causing death by negligent conduct and should be put to trial.

Ing. Shayowitz is charged for not having checked the hours during the day in which a watchman was to be present at the level crossing; He further decided that the watchman would be there only until noon, although lorries continued to cross the track much later into the night; He also cancelled the speed restriction for the trains passing there.

Ing. Volkov is accused of ignoring the dangers at the level crossing; He did not check how his employees were fulfilling instructions, and as the police defined it: "No warning lamp had been lit-up there".

Regarding the lorry company owners, they are accused of enabling their drivers to work 12 hours continuously, without checking the hours worked, and even forging the tachometer.

Surprisingly or not, the former Israel Railways General Manager Mr. Yossi Mor, who had resigned, has been found not guilty at all and as entirely clean; Furthermore, the Police found documents according to which he had instructed the two accused senior officers to take all precautions at level crossings located near construction sites connected with lorries crossing tracks, but these were not actually implemented!!

Yossi Mor told the press, in response to the Police conclusions, that he is not surprised at anything, and that he was always confident in the justice of his case.

Israel Railways official response was that they have not yet received the report,

and will respond after learning it; The brothers Eliyahu responded similarly, claiming that they are not responding to rumours.

On 11.10.2005, both the Transport Ministry and Israel Railways Ltd. briefed the public with two separate press releases regarding grade separations replacing level crossings:

(i). From the press release of the Transport Ministry:

"Transport Minister Mr. Meir Shitrit has announced that during the next three years \$370 million (1.7 billion Shekels) will be invested by the Ministry and Israel Railways in grade separations.

Mr. Shitrit has instructed the railways to create a new Directorate which will prepare a comprehensive plan for building grade separations at all existing level crossings; Work on grade separations already under construction will continue under the Railways' responsibility, while new ones will be under the Directorate's responsibility; The Directorate will consist on members of the Transport Ministry, the National Company for Roads (formerly the historical Public Works Department of the Transport Ministry), and Israel Railways Ltd.

According to Mr. Shitrit, the new directorate will be responsible for all grade separations projects and will also inspect them, in order to complete the works within the shortest available time."

Mr. Shitrit has also decided to create a Supreme Steering Committee for the directorate to be headed by the General Manager of the Transport Ministry Mr. Arie Bar, which will include all the transport bodies that deal with grade separations; The committee will, among other activities, decide on priorities and will follow-up their progress.

Mr. Arie Bar has instructed Israel Railways' newly-appointed General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky to prepare a report which will include all the level crossings in Israel, priority outlines for planning and implementation of grade separations, and an offer for follow-up works; When this plan has been approved by the Transport Ministry, it will then be presented to the Budgets Division of the Finance Ministry for final approval.

(Cynics have already pointed out that, while we have to wait and watch the implementation of the ambitious plans, two facts are not even openly discussed: That a lot of new jobs will be created, and that for Mr. Linchevsky, all these committees are very familiar; after all, he came from the Finance Ministry and worked as an official at the Transport Ministry! A.G.).

(ii). The press release from Israel Railways was as follows:

The Railways are announcing today all the precautions taken in order to increase safety, as lessons from the collision near Revadim (on the line to Beer-Sheva); already in November 2005, additional essential precautions will be taken.

The precautions already taken are:

1. All unprotected level crossings have been closed, and a decision has been taken, according to which there won't be any more unprotected level crossings.

2. In co-ordination with the Transport Ministry, \$217 million (1 billion Shekels) have been allocated for building immediately 31 grade separations.

3. The subject of increased budget for additional grade separations is now under serious discussion; This means that half of all existing level crossings will become grade separations.

4. A new directorate for grade separations is being created (see the Transport Ministry's announcement).

5. A safety phone centre (the number is *2442), has been created; This can be reached by any regular and cellular phone from anywhere in Israel, 24 hours a day, and it will receive all reports regarding problems or dangers at level crossings.

6. The Railways have completed as of today the erection of warning signs at all the existing 160 level crossings all over Israel.

7. A special safety consultant from the UK has been brought in order to prepare a report which will soon be presented, regarding level crossing safety according to international parameters.

8. Generally speaking, all the new lines such as Beer-Sheva - Dimona, Ben-Gurion airport to Modi'in and Jerusalem, are fully grade separated.

The newly-appointed General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky said: "Israel Railways' top target issue is safety; We've started with effective operational precautions in order to prevent any troublesome level crossings; We're determined to close all the unprotected level crossings; The 27 million passengers who are being carried by rail annually can be sure that Israel Railways will continue to be the safest mean of transport".

(k). VALLEY LINE CONFLICTS.

Works are under way on reviving the historic Haifa branch of the Hedjaz Railway. However, a protest has been submitted by inhabitants of Kibbutz Yagur - about 10km. east of Haifa. The Kibbutz was founded in 1922 when the line was in operation and even had a halt. Now, residents are complaining that the revived line will pass within 50m. of their houses and will cause noise and vibration. They claim that the alignment was altered at another location for these reasons, and see no reason why they should suffer discrimination.

(l). SUKKOT TRAVEL OFFERS.

During the week-long Sukkot holidays Israel Railways added trains, and enabled passengers who bought tickets to destinations where festivals were taking place, such as Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Akko, Arad, Rishon-Le-Zion, etc. to enter these places with 20% reductions; Also included in the combined fares were buses that would take them from and to the stations.

(m). DOUBLE-TRACKING WORKS.

From a press release of 26.10.2005 by the Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Due to works of double-tracking, the following sections of line will be closed to traffic for this weekend:

Between Thursday 27.10.2005 at 18:00 and Saturday night 29.10.2005 (including), the sections B'nei-Brak - Petakh-Tikva-Sgula and Rosh-Ha-Ayin - Kfar-Sava - Hod-Hasharon will be closed for traffic; trains on this line will terminate at B'nei-Brak station.

The second line section to be closed is between Nahariya and Kiryat-Motzkin; it will be closed between Saturday night 29.10.2005 and Sunday 30.10.2005; here the three trains from Nahariya to Ben-Gurion airport departing at 01:02, 02:02, and 03:02 will depart as usual."

(n). SEPTEMBER 2005 STATISTICS.

From a press release of 27.10.2005 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

During September 2005, the railways carried 2,168,822 passengers, 44.9% more than in September 2004! From the beginning of 2005, 20,222,344 were carried - 22.8% more than in the same period of 2004.

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

- Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem line: 85,000: +149%!
- Tel-Aviv - Ashkelon line: 326,003: +50%!
- Tel-Aviv - Rishon-Le-Zion (Rishonim) line: 59,986: +48%.
- Tel-Aviv - Netanya line: 207,109: +40%.
- Tel-Aviv - Haifa line: 444,564: +34%.
- Tel-Aviv - Rosh-Ha-Ayin - Kfar-Sava line: 148,348: +34%.
- Tel-Aviv - Nahariya line: 262,723: +32%.
- Haifa - Nahariya line: 165,552: +31%.
- Ashkelon - Haifa line: 111,916: +27%.
- Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheva line: 242,985: +20%.

Israel Railways' administration is very satisfied from these figures, and believes that, in view of the passenger traffic from the beginning of 2005 and until September 2005 (inclusive), the total number of passengers in 2005 will exceed the targets and reach 27 million!

There are three important facts to note in this report:

1. The new General Manager Mr. Linchevsky, comes from the Finance Ministry; hence there will be no more estimated figures - only exact figures!
2. The passengers on the line to Beer-Sheva have behaved as predicted; traffic has fully recovered (after the decline caused by the two train/lorry collisions) and confidence in rail service has returned, due partly to the precautions taken at level crossings!
3. The enormous rise in passenger traffic on the rebuilt line to Jerusalem proves that all the sceptical people who did not believe in it were quite wrong!

(o). SECURITY SYSTEMS.

An Israeli computers company,

Binnet-Systems Applications, has recently won two rail projects worth \$434 million.

Both projects deal with security control systems; the first was installed at Lod station and depot, and the second one at the new Beer-Sheva University station; at both places the equipment consists of CCTV, digital events recording, fixed and mobile video cameras. The company was founded in 1989 and has 120 employees.

(p). POSSIBLE SCANDALS?

Unfortunately, not everything is going so well. About a year ago, the former State Comptroller Judge (retired) Eliezer Goldberg, started to investigate what exactly is going on within the Railways, relying on information from the most popular newspaper in Israel - 'Yediot Akharonot' ('Latest News'). According to this, many political appointments had taken place there, putting unskilled people in sensitive jobs - which might endanger the Railways' safety. The former General Manager Yossi Mor, who recently resigned, himself claimed that he was forced by the Directorate to accept the appointments. Conclusions are to be published soon.

(q). MORE DISCUSSIONS ON JERUSALEM LINKS.

The State Control Committee has discussed this week also the status of the A1 fast link to Jerusalem. Here, the Transport Minister Mr. Shitrit, has stated that "the chosen alternative A1 is the only and best one to be built, the project is underway, and nothing can now stop it"!

However, the Committee has also discussed once again the heavy investments in rebuilding the old line to Jerusalem, raising the question whether it was worth the cost. The subject became even more complicated when one of the senior mechanical engineers explained on a TV programme that there are problems in operating the line with IC3 trains which have 2.700 m wheel-base bogies suffering from cracks at their frames due to the sharp curves which they negotiate. Of course, he was immediately asked if the railways operate trains at any risk just to keep the line's services running on time. The engineer's hesitant answer added to the cross fire, and the whole matter is now in the hands of the newly-appointed State Comptroller Judge (retired) Michael Lindenstauss, who is determined to "clean the stables" of all public services (of course not only the Railways) from corruption; we'll have to wait and see what comes next.

(r). DELAYS AND FIGHTS.

The railways are also facing a lot of delays - of 30 minutes and more - and this week (27. October 2005. Ed.), when a train arrived late at Tel-Aviv, the railway authorities decided that this train, heading for Kfar Sava, would not call at intermediate stations; Angry passengers blocked the train's departure with their bodies; the train was cancelled, but the Railways' excuse, that cancelling the intermediate stations was in order to avoid further delays, was not accepted in court, and they will have to pay penalties.

(s). ROLLING STOCK NOTES

Eight new double-deck coaches were landed at Ashdod Port on 02.10.05. Their numbers are: 502, 503, 526, 527, 529, 530, 532, 533

(t). SAFETY MATTERS.

From a press release of 08.11.2005 by the Israel Railways Ltd. "The Railways directorate has discussed on 06.11.2005 the recommendations and conclusions of Touchstone Renard and decided to adopt and implement them entirely; The company carried out a comprehensive survey during the last 3 months, and as a result, prepared a works programme to strengthen the safety systems and apply them to the changing technologies and to the growth in railway activity.

For the first time, the railway will appoint a Deputy General Manager for Safety who will be directly under the General Manager, who himself will have the higher responsibility for the railways' safety; also, all the safety procedures will be standardized, and finally, a safety management system will be developed to ensure quality and safety of rail products and services; each department and level will be responsible for the safety of their own area.

The programme's implementation will take 18 months.

The Chairman of Directorate Mr. Moshe Leon, said: "Safety is, from now on, the top priority; Building new lines as well as operating the existing one, thus increasing the network, means we must be committed to high standards of safety in order to ensure that railways remain the safest and most efficient transport mode."

The General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky, said: "2006 has been declared as the Year of Safety for the railways, during which the employees will receive professional tools of international level; the implementation of the programme will be a continuation of the efforts made recently by closing problematic level crossings and with a budget of \$234 million for grade separations, either by bridges or tunnels".

(u). DIMONA REOPENING.

From a press release of 09.11.2005 by the Ministry of Transport:-

The Transport Minister Mr. Meir Shitrit, told the press today that the rebuilt line between Beer-Sheva and Dimona (36 km), used so far for over 15 years for freight only, will be reopened for passenger traffic as well on 17.12.2005.

The line, which was rebuilt at a cost of \$36 Million, will be covered in 23 minutes, giving an average speed of almost 94 km/h.

Mr. Shitrit added that high investments in railway infrastructures at the empty southern part of Israel are of great importance; they are cutting travel times to and from the centre and will encourage people to live in the south and work in the centre, thus slowing down the unbelievable overcrowding of residents at the centre. He added that the same relates to the Galilee, which should also be a destination for investment;

Finally he mentioned 15 railway projects underway, including: Ben-Gurion airport to Modi'in at a cost of \$320 million, a third track along the Ayalon line of Tel-Aviv at a cost of \$60 million, and the line between Ashdod and Ashkelon (completion only) at a cost of \$46 million.

(v). COMMUTER PRESSURE GROUP.

A daily commuter on the Kfar-Sava - Tel-Aviv line has formed a pressure-group of passengers who together appealed to Court against the railways administration regarding the daily delays of more than 30 minutes, as well as cancelled trains, high tariffs, and other facts of daily services, which the leader, Mr. Eli Gabai, a lawyer, has raised.

The Railways spokesman, Mr. Benny Naor, in his response, said that the compensation for a 30 minutes delay (a free ticket for the line) is unique, and as for the claim that passengers are not aware of their right to get the compensation, he explained that it is published in the internet, as well as in the timetables; Regarding the delays, he said that while the traffic boom continues, the fleet can't be increased at the same rate due to production times, but with the arrival of additional trains delays will be minimized (this does not explain why there are delays of up to 40 minutes on the rebuilt Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem line, despite empty trains between Jerusalem and Beit-Shemesh; Although they are well utilized between Beit-Shemesh and Tel-Aviv - these are operated sometimes with 6-car formations -2 x IC3.A.G.).

(w). COMPLAINTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Railways' administration is often facing funny complaints; here are two examples:

At the station of Beit-Yehushua (6 km south of Netanya), which is in heavy demand by the travelling, people who wish merely to cross the lines through the underground pedestrian subway have to pay for a ticket; many are prepared to do this because the track is well fenced, and the nearest passage is 25 minutes walk away, but they complain that the additional payment does not add to rail popularity.

Mr. Benny Naor explained that the passage through the station is not really a regular pedestrian passage, but promised on behalf of the railways' administration that they will do all they can to find an agreeable solution.

The second example is tragic, though not necessarily the railways' fault:

A citizen of Ashdod, aged 74, felt suddenly pressure in his chest; his daughter took him with her car to the nearby hospital at Rehovot; However, due to a bottle neck caused by a closed level crossing (the barrier arms were down for a train's passage), they were stuck there for more than 10 critical minutes, during which an intensive care ambulance arrived, but unfortu-

nately he died. His daughter and the family said that he had been a healthy person until that day and added that they can't blame the railways for that, though a grade separation may have prevented the bottleneck and perhaps his death; The Railways' administration said that they're checking the reason for the delay in the train's passage.

(x). NEW TIMETABLE.

A new IR timetable was due to come into effect as from 17.12.05. The main addition is the reopening of a passenger service to Dimona (exactly 26 years after this was withdrawn) with five trains scheduled in each direction to/from Beersheba Tzafon (North). Also, following completion of track doubling, those trains which previously terminated at Ashdod now continue through to Ashkelon.

71.05. TENDERS.

(i). Tender No. HN/SR/08/05: Carrying out machining works for Israel Railways (by lathes and frazers). The purpose of works: Manufacturing of spare parts for the various equipment in service of tracks department. The contract is for 24 months with an optional extension for additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 30.10.2005.

(ii). Tender No. HN/KB/30/05: Building an acoustic wall along the tracks near Atlit and Dor settlements (on the Northern section of the Tel-Aviv - Haifa main line). Works include: earthworks, concrete cast, pre-stressed concrete structures, sealing, electricity, painting, piles and drills, etc. Time of Implementation: 6 months; Latest bidding date: 30.10.2005.

(iii). Tender No. BN/KB/12/05: Building a refuelling system at the Dimona station complex. (36 km Southeast of Beer-Sheva) (there is also a loco depot and freight car repair facilities at the complex).

Works include: Earthworks, concrete and civil engineering works, manufacturing and building of fuel tanks of 250 cu.m. and 90 cu.m., building a pump house and a moveable structure for control room, refuelling positions, storages, instruments and controls, electricity, pipelines, welding, plating and installations. Time of implementation: 6 months; Latest bidding date: 07.11.2005.

(iv). Tender No. BN/KB/15/05: Building of Yavne East station. Works include:

Structure 01 - the station building.
Structure 02 - development works and parking areas.
Time of implementation: 10 months; Latest bidding date: 27.10.2005.

(v). Tender No. HN/KB/31/05: Building railway bridges on the Ayalon South line (to Rishon-Le-Zion West and Ashdod) from Tel-Aviv Hahagana station to bridges at crossing point (km 97+020 to km 97+400), and Heil Hashirion (Ar-

mour Corps) bridge.

Works include the following structures:

Structure 01 - bridge A.
Structure 02 - bridge B - concrete works by pumping system.
Structure 03 - includes works from the Ayalon channel.
Structure 04 - bridge D - concrete works by pumping system.
Time of Implementation: for structures 01 to 03: 18 months; for structure 04: 12 months after completing 01 to 03. Latest bidding date: 15.11.2005.

(vi). Tender No. BN/MT/07/05: Measurement services (inspection and quality control) on the Akko-Carmiel line (under construction).

The contract is for 5 years; the Railways reserve themselves the rights to extend the contract according to the needs, but not longer than the project's end. Latest bidding date: 04.12.2005.

(vii). Tender No. MC/KB/08/05: Replacing gutters at Haifa Kishon works.

Works include: dismantling and removal of old gutters and replacing them by new 2 mm. galvanized sheet gutters. Implementation time: 21 days. Latest bidding date: 28.11.2005.

(viii). Tender No. TM/KB/02/05: Works of cleaning drainage and sewerage channels and installations along the tracks from Bezet (the most northern station, about 3 km north of Nahariya) in the north and up to Oron (phosphate ores) in the south. Works include: cleaning of culverts, alluvium, and waste, as well as its removal by truck. The contract is for 12 months with an optional extension of up to an additional 24 months; however, the work will be given from time to time according to needs. Latest bidding date: 28.11.2005.

(ix). Tender No. MC/KB/09/05: Rebuilding of concrete structures at Haifa Kishon works. Works include: concrete works and cleaning. Implementation time: 5 weeks. Latest bidding date: 28.11.2005.

(x). Tender No. NO/SR/23/05: A frame agreement for cleaning services for the rolling stock and motive power, to be carried out mainly at the depots of Haifa and Lod.

The contract is for 24 months; the railways' administration reserves itself the right to extend it by up to additional 48 months. Latest bidding date: 04.1.2005.

(xi). International Tender No. EL/AG/01/05: This refers to amended Tender Terms for the Electrification of Israel Railways, dated 13.11.2005. More details are available on the IR website at www.israrail.org.il.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The first seven and several others from Paul Cotterell!

(a). Re: Issue 70, BACK COVER PICTURE (and the coyly-hidden caption on page 20). The high flying "G12" 251 is, in fact, a G8.

(b). Re: 70:15, SYRIA-OTTOMAN RAILWAY DOCUMENT.

1) A gradient of 2% = 1 in 50, 1-1/2% = 1 in 75.

2) Bellad-esh Chekh [sic] was indeed shown at K. 2+00 in the document, but in every other known reference it is given as Km 4.5 (give or take a few metres).

3) Although the editorial remarks imply that Meissner took over the unfinished works from the Syrian - Ottoman Railway and completed the 'Valley Railway', as has been generally assumed, I cannot recall any hard documentary evidence for this. From my reading on the subject (limited, and missing German language sources, never mind Turkish), I am left with the impression that the work was sort of carried out by committee. Just what was Meissner's personal role in building the Haifa - Dera'a branch?

(c). THE TZOMET JELAMEH BRIDGE:

A photo of this stone bridge appeared in 63:13 and it was mentioned also in 70:08:(h). For some time Chen Melling has been of the opinion that this bridge was built not by the Turks as part of the Hedjaz Railway from Haifa, but by the failed British Syria-Ottoman Railway. He based this opinion on differences in style between the Tzomet Jelameh bridge and others of approximately the same size further along "The Valley Railway" which were built by the Turks. His theory was reinforced when he discovered a passing phrase in a Hebrew language book, the title of which translates as "In the Land of the East", by Avraham Shmuel Hirschberg, which appears to have been written about 1899-1900, i.e. well before the Turks built their line. The phrase reads "...they are building the railway and already a small section has been built and also the crossing on the River Qishon" (my emphasis). There are problems with the Hebrew used. The word here translated 'section' (shetach) nowadays means 'area', while the word used for "crossing" (ma'avrah) sounds antiquated and quaint today. This is not unusual in Hebrew publications of a century and more ago, when the language was being revived and had yet to settle into a generally accepted form. I have to wonder why Hirschberg did not use the word "bridge" (gesher) instead of "crossing" unless, just possibly, there was a temporary crossing of the Qishon before the permanent bridge was built. I think this unlikely, however, and am inclined to agree with Chen's conclusion, at least until something more concrete turns up to decide the issue one way or the other. (P.C.)

(d). Re: 70:10, THE MOUCHLY SNAPSHOTS.

1). There is the corner of a building in the

right background (that hardly shows up on the printed page) which, among other considerations, inclines me to think that the group photo with the La Meuse 0-10-0T was taken at Haifa East, probably in the early 1920s.

2). Location is anyone's guess. I think the third class coach is LSWR - those appear to be Mansell wheels with wooden centres. Is there a very faint running number alongside the door? The freight vehicle in the background has distinctive diagonal side bracing/stanchions. Could this be the same type seen in the photo at Bet Shemesh on page 24 of issue 66?

3). Definitely a PEC 60cm. gauge Hunslet 4-6-0T. Taken at Naharayim about 1930: the ladies are in 'flapper' dresses and cloche hats while the gents sport white suits and at least one 'boater' hat. Still fashionable, but fashion was soon to quickly change as the Great Depression really took hold.

4). Difficult one this. The background houses and stone wall should provide the necessary clues. It is not Haifa. I don't think it's on the approach to Jerusalem either. My best guess would be somewhere between Jaffa and Tel Aviv.

5). Kishon Works only opened in 1932 and were built with a high sloping roof absent from this view. The people are dressed in clothes of an altogether earlier era, probably circa First World War. Several familiar HR engines in the background. This is most certainly Cadem Works at Damascus. I do not think it was taken later than 1919 because Baruch Katinke wrote that he and Jacob (Ya'akov) Mouchly left Damascus for Palestine at the end of that year.

[The Editor adds - the 1929 'Palestine Blue Book' p. 128 notes Jacob Mouchly as Works Managaer, Grade 2, at Haifa, date of first appointment: 1.10.1920. i.e. at the very start of the Palestine Railways.]

(e). Re 70:08 (h): THE 1933 CLOSURES.

The wording to the entry "El Mujeidal Road" will be a cause of confusion - my apologies. El Mujeidal itself was several kilometres north of the Hedjaz Railway. El Mujeidal Road was the name of the HR halt nearest to the village, and it was in the vicinity of the site of the halt that Meir Shapira found the culvert bridge

Yehuda Levanoni informs that Kafr Lam halt would have been at what is now Habonim, just north of Dor/Tantura.

(f). THE RIDDLE OF THE OLD SETTLEMENT AT GINEGAR:

Quite recently I was kindly presented, by the author, with a small illustrated Hebrew language publication with the above title, written and privately published by Meir Shamir of Kibbutz Ginegar which is mid-way between Afula and Nazareth. Nicely produced, with several old photos of the kib-

butz, and obviously a labour of love, this booklet attempts to explain the origins of a few old buildings on the kibbutz which seem to have had no agricultural or other obvious purpose. I shall not attempt a precis of his work here, but it is of interest to us to note that Meir makes out a reasoned case for these buildings having been intended to serve on a proposed railway branch line from Kfar Baruch to Nazareth - not a branch line of the Hedjaz Railway, nor even of the predecessor Syria-Ottoman Railway, but of the network of lines (described as the "Hamidith Railway") proposed by Sir Lawrence Oliphant back in the 1880s.

It is not often that the pre-history of railways in Israel is touched upon, particularly in such a specific manner, so Meir Shamir is to be applauded for tackling such an obscure subject. A modern map in the booklet has been marked with the conjectured route of this never-built branch line which, if it had been laid, would have taken a snake-like course from the Jezreel Valley up to the southern outskirts of the hill town of Nazareth. (P.C.)

(g). Re. 70:08 (g): ANOTHER 'FLYING ZEPPELIN' WAGON?

Since we're on the subject: a decade ago I was given an old photo which had been taken at some unknown railway station in Palestine in WW1 by the grandfather of the guy who sent me the print. This guy wanted to know where the photo was taken, and it took me till now to nail it down!

It shows the old Turkish station at Beisan (Bet She'an) and was evidently taken just after the British had conquered the place in September 1918 because several soldiers (including at least one Indian - Sikh I think) are looking around the station. This, incidentally, is the only photo I've seen of the complete original station building at Beisan - not surprising since it had to be pulled down at the end of 1933 when it was in imminent danger of collapse.

Anyway prominent in the photo is another former Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway low-sided goods wagon. This is evidently number Pf 54, though the 'f' cannot be seen - perhaps it is hidden behind a metal stanchion. Checking that CFH blueprint again (T.9084) shows that this number does, indeed, accord with the J&J list. This time the number is boldly shown on the side of the wagon rather than on the end planks. In addition, there is something very bulky on the wagon. Chen Melling and I have looked long and hard at this. We can't be sure, but think it might be an airplane engine minus the propeller. If so, then this would vindicate Katinke's claim to have converted more than one wagon for use with an aeroplane engine - actually, if I remember correctly, Katinke wrote that he converted "many" such. By the way, there is also slight photographic evidence for a third example at least.

The CFH blueprint T.9084 shows that the Turks used confusing numbering systems for vehicles on the different railways in the Middle East before World War One - or were the French to blame? Though not quite on a par with ancient hieroglyphics, we could cer-

tainly do with a Rosetta Stone of more photographic evidence to help unravel the many imponderables. (P.C.)

(h). SUEZ W.D. WORKSPLATES.

"Black Eight", the magazine of the Stanier 8F Locomotive Society, is always full of items on the operation of these locos not only in Britain but in the Middle East in World War 2 and later, and the Royal Engineers and military railways in general. (Both the Editor and Paul Cotterell appear frequently as contributors). In issue 118, p. 21, is an item concerning a recent donation to the Society by the widow of the late Lieutenant Michael Kemp who was, from around 1951-1953, the Locomotive Superintendent at the 169 Railway Workshops Company unit based at Suez. This includes a quantity of paperwork, some sundry items such as flags and caps, and three worksplates, which he had clearly retained as souvenirs.

They comprise (text from George Moon in 'Black Eight'):-

1. Armstrong Whitworth cast brass plate with a circular symbol between the words. These were carried above the radiator on the AW jackshaft-driven 0-6-0D diesel-electric shunters WD 19 - 22, originally LMS 7060 / 7065 / 7066 / 7068, which were sent to the Middle East in May 1941 and remained in the Canal Zone. Nos. 19 and 21 were scrapped around 1951, so it is probable the plate came from one of these. (The other two were sold to the ESR about 1952 and worked until 1974.)

2. North British Locomotive Company circular works plate 24739 of 1942. This came from an 8F built as WD 546, order L937 of August 1941 for 33 engines and tenders. It was one of the 155 shipped to Persia between September 1941 and March 1942, becoming IrSR 41.221, oil-fired. In 1944 it was one of 50 sent by sea to Egypt; of these, 35 were overhauled and the other 15, including 546, laid aside, but gradually overhauled between 1946 and 1952, still under WD control. Now 70546, it lost its boiler to 70591 (ex-LMS No.8018) which returned to BR in 1949. Its frames were fitted with a spare boiler before it was sold to Egyptian State Railways in 1951, becoming ESR 891. Quite likely it was at this time that the plate was removed.

3. Vulcan Foundry oval works plate 4736 of 1936. The locomotive from which this came was built for the LMS as their 8059. It was requisitioned in 1941 and overhauled at Crewe in November, being converted to oil firing, fitted with air brakes and cowcatchers and replainted black with 2-inch numerals. All 51 requisitioned locomotives were shipped to Persia where 613 became IrSR 41.205. Like 307 it made the overland trip through Iraq to Palestine, arriving in March 1946, now WD 70613. In May it went to the Haifa - Beirut - Tripoli line but by 1947 was in store at Azzib. It was selected to return as part of the BR purchase but could not be spared, so remained in the Canal Zone under WD control and was renumbered 515 in 1952. Sold to ESR in 1954, with the other ten remaining 8F's, it became ESR 840."

In the Letters pages of the same issue are mentions of 8F WD 70387, NBL 24695, steamed 8/41, sent to Persia 10/41, where it became 41.155; it was still in WD ownership in the Canal Zone in 1952 and in 1956 was part of the remaining stores sold to the ESR where it became No. 834. It was named "Cpl. W. J. Lendrim VC RE". Also a mention by Paul of a website - www.britishpathe.com, clip no. 2351.05, which shows five or six seconds of film of 8F 70510 at Ras el Ein on 11/11/1947, following some terrorist action there.

(i). ON 69:16, REAR COVER. A note in "NS 'De Koppeling'" 22/07/2005 (thanks to Marc Stegeman) informs us that the creator of the dress made from old tickets was Yaron Minkovsky of Tel Aviv; Himself a fanatical commuter by train, he went hunting through station waste bins to gather six thousand tickets for the dress.

(j). A TRIP TO PALESTINA.

Klaus Matzka draws attention to the fact that there will be a rare opportunity to visit Palestina in Chile, as mentioned some years ago. A tour, organised by a Swiss and a German travel agency, together with 'Fahrplancenter News', is planned to cover the route: Campo Grande, Brasil - Corumba - Santa Cruz - Yacuiba - Pocositos - Embarcacion - Güemes - Salta - San Antonio de los Cobres - Viaducto la Polvorilla - Socompa - PALESTINA - Antofagasta - Calama - Ollagüe - Uyuni - maybe a sidetrip to Potosi via Condor Pass - Oruro - Viacha - maybe sidetrips to La Paz and Lake Titicaca - Arica, Chile. i.e. Four countries, three times over the Andes! 4000 km on the metre gauge in a railbus! Daytime trips only, the nights - with one exception - in hotels. Cost: □5000 - □6000. This will hopefully happen in October/November 2007! And - if successful - in alternating directions - in following months.

" (k). THE KAISER'S RAILWAY JOURNEY.

Photos and even a short piece of Lumières Brother film bear testimony to the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany to Jerusalem in November 1898. From Chen Melling, via Paul, comes an account of the visit. Taken from "Die Reise des Kaisers und der Kaiserin nach Palästina", it comprises the texts of three lectures delivered by Ernst Freiherr von Mirbach, published in Berlin 1899. Notable is that the railway itself gets hardly a mention! The translation of pp. 82-85 is by the Editor:-

"The wonderful ceremonial atmosphere of the service seemed, as we left the church, to be mirrored in the evening skies, which, following the showers, covered Jerusalem in unusual splendour. One could barely tear oneself away from the view from the church tower. It was as though in the heavens all the air glowed and shone; torn black, silver and gold clouds passed over us, a pink-purple shimmer lay over the whitish-grey walls of the City; The top of the Mount of Olives with the shining white cloisters and churches and the distant mountains towards the Moabite mountains were redened as though in an alpine glow. It was

the final farewell greeting! The darkness soon fell.

There was a sad visit to be made in the Kaiserin's name, to a handsome villa some distance from the Damascus Gate, the home of a higher Turkish Schools official. His sweet, seven-year old daughter, who but a few days before had presented a bouquet to the Kaiserin as part of a deputation, and as a souvenir had received a brooch, had been so severely injured when her dress caught fire through contact with the illuminations that she had died after a few hours and been buried yesterday. The father's gratitude for the Kaiserin's friendly gesture was moving - the mother, as a Turk, did not of course present herself - but for our feelings it was nevertheless remarkable, how quickly the Mohammedan comes to terms with bitter fate. "God wanted it so, and so there is nothing that can be done to change it. It is therefore for the best. It is only a great good fortune, that it was not a son." Immediately after the death of a family member, a Mohammedan may let free rein to his feelings. In the house of mourning the Wailing Women would be ordered - as mentioned in the Bible - who would spend several hours howling and wailing and weeping with the wife. After the burial men come, in the case of well-off families normally grey, honorific sheikhs, and they continue the weeping and crying in the house for a further eight days and are fed and paid for their time. Then, however, the mourning must be stopped and, at least externally, one must act as though one has forgotten it. In this respect the Mohammedans also have no concept of care for a grave. With the exception of those of a few holy men, the graves, which are mostly decorated with large memorial stones, immediately start to decay.

The evening had become cool following the storms, the first evening in which the meal was not taken in the big, open Turkish Gala tent. Strong gusts of wind battered the camp, black clouds raced across the skies. In the camp there was a lot of activity. The ropes and pegs of the tents, which were flapping in the wind, were tightened, and small trenches and mounds of earth built to surround the tents. Everything was prepared for storm and rainfall, for these were predicted by the locals who knew the weather signs. At the same time we were told that when the storm, due around this time, really broke, then none of our precautions in the camp would be of any effect and we would be swept down the slope. The cases were packed and everything prepared for flight in the Noah's Ark - the big catering barrack. As soon as the storm begins at this season, it settles in and lasts for several days. For this reason the Hotel du Parc in Jaffa was prepared in advance for our reception on the following day. Whether and when it would be possible for us to embark in the infamous, storm-ridden and dangerously rocky harbour at Jaffa with its breakers - this worried our travel guides enormously, and they bewailed the fact that we had not already left today.

But a relatively calm and cool night followed. There was no wind or storm, and on the 4th. November the sun rose once

again over a wonderful and glowing blue sky. It was 15 degrees in the shade, so that we - by now accustomed to the burning heat - felt that we were freezing.

Soon after 8am. we left the tented camp; the cavalry at the front, the Kaiserin in a coach, the Kaiser and his attendants on horses, then the long caravan of wagons. We went the accustomed way down to the Jaffa Gate, then in the Hinnom valley along the city walls and down the steep road which leads to Bethlehem, up to the plateau where, near the friendly, pretty colony of the Württemberg Templars the station lies. On the way from the camp to the station countless masses of people stood, from the poorest Jews of the Colonies before the Jaffa Gate to the golden gleaming uniforms of the Turkish officers and higher officials at the station. It was an impressive, hearty farewell offered by the entire population. All the children, Christian and Jewish, were lined up by schools and classes and sang; a few military guards stood along the road. At the station a stronger body of troops stood to attention, and in their childish innocence played as their March the song "So leben wir, so leben wir" ("So we live, so we live"). The worthy musicians must have spent months practicing this well-known Prussian melody, and they did their best and managed on the whole to get the right notes at the right time. Apart from the Turkish military and civil leadership there also appeared the ancient and honoured Armenian Patriarch, the younger and pleasant Greek patriarch, the German-Catholic clergy and the monks and nuns, also the Turkish clergy - all in their finery - and finally, with our Protestant clergy many members of our Protestant Community and the Templars and our Deacons. The many diverse elements united here in a common expression of thanks and a common farewell greeting. It was an amazing and impressive display of harmony - the 'Kaiser Salute' of the Mahomedan troops, the singing of the Turkish youths, the blessings of the Bishops and Patriarchs, combined with the German cheers of joy, all rose together into the heavens, as the train slowly set itself in motion.

It wound its way through the deeply-cut valleys of the Judean mountains, past many famous places of ancient times and the Middle Ages. In the valley it is no longer so bare and stony, first one sees frequent olive trees, and then evidence of agriculture - fields and vineyards. In the richly-cultivated 'Valley of Roses', which well deserves its name, lies Bittir, well-known in ancient times for its dreadful battles. Here grow wonderful trees, bearing fruit of all sorts, carefully cultivated, everything still green, with many flowers, vegetables, the beets provided with plenty of water in spite of the long drought. The cultivation of vines reaches up high upon the mountains, the natural terraces have been artificially built upwards all around, with stones and walls, and planted. And so it went on, between rocks and rich greenery, over bridges, past Turkish guardposts and forts, into the plain below. We were greeted joyously by the inhabitants of Ramleh and Lydda, where Peter founded the first church community and performed miracles, before

he was called from Jaffa to Tabea and then to Caesarea to the Centurion Cornelius. Through large olive and orange plantations, grain and maize fields, the train ran, and came at 1 o'clock into the station of Jaffa.

In carriages - the Kaiser and the Kaiserin with the Turkish Ambassador in the first one - always escorted by the cavalry - we travelled through the richly-decorated, celebrating town, through the colourful and lively bazaar filled with masses of people, but marked with a Dutch degree of cleanliness, and so to the beach. Accompanied by wonderful weather and with calm seas we embarked onto the 'Hohenzollern'. Almost four hours went by before all the baggage had been brought on small boats from the shore. What would it have been like here, had the feared storm indeed made its presence felt! How long, how many days would the breakers have roared! What a wonderful feeling of relief. The calm, the cleanliness, and no dust any more on the beautiful ship! The descending sun lit up the town as we departed, with a mass of people at the water's edge still sending greetings, and the distant mountains. Only one week had gone by, since we had arrived here, and yet what a long time, filled with experiences, now seemed to lie behind us!

The night was unbearably hot. From Caesarea and Haifa lighthouses greeted the calm sea and in the grey of dawn, the 5th. November, we arrived off Beirut....."

(I). THE DECAUVILLE IN THE TUNNEL. By Paul Cotterell.

I first met Shoshana-Migdal-Klein-Bindiger at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, oh, back in the early 90s I guess. She was researching for a book on the town of Herzliyya where she had been born in 1927, just three years after the first Jewish settlers set down roots there. At her invitation I later gave a talk in Herzliyya on the history of Israel Railways. Since then Shoshana has taken something of a maternal interest in me, encouraging me to complete and publish my historical photo album book on railways in Palestine and Israel. I'm afraid both she and I remain frustrated in this as no publisher has yet been found, but I'm glad to say that her book saw the light of day in 2005 and has been well received. Most generously, Shoshana sent me a copy. The English title is "Herzliyah, the First Decade, its Foundation, Establishment and Development, 1924 - 1934", and is a splendid local history, well illustrated and running to over 200 footnoted pages.

Since, as far as I knew, there was no railway of any kind anywhere near Herzliyya during the decade in question I had not expected to find any mention of the subject, so was surprised to come across an intriguing photo on page 137 of a Decauville line, side-tip wagon, and group of pioneer workers in the very narrow confines of a tunnel. Shoshana told me that the tunnel dates back to Roman times. It is located under the upscale neighbourhood of Herzliyya Pituach situated on a hill a couple of kilometres west of the town itself. Today the main line of IR passes close by. Between the town and Herzliyya Pituach is an expanse of marshy

ground which was once a swamp. This marshy area used to provide headaches for IR. In the rainy season the main line formation became waterlogged and the track could move or subside, necessitating increased maintenance and speed restrictions over several kilometres until the line was doubled in the early 1990s, when remedial measures were taken to eliminate the problem.

The hill on which Herzliyya Pituach sits was once known by the British army as "Jenkin's Hill" (see map in 25:13). I do not know why the Romans (if indeed it was them) wanted to drain the swamp, maybe for agricultural purposes, but they must have considered the project of some importance to go to all the trouble of excavating a drainage tunnel through the hill. The photo in Shoshana's book shows the "German Group" of local Jewish pioneers (actually they were Polish!) using the temporary Decauville track and tip wagon to clean out the tunnel in 1925 after, presumably, centuries of disuse.

(m). THE CENTENARY OF THE 'VALLEY RAILWAY' by Paul Cotterell.

1. On Saturday evening 22.10.05 an exhibition opened in the Haifa Museum (at the foot of Ben-Gurion Avenue) on the centenary of the Hedjaz Railway line in Palestine/Israel. The exhibition consists mainly of a large number of photos, maps, documents etc. It is certainly recommended, though I would have been even more enthusiastic had all the photos been devoted to the 'Valley Railway' (rather too many are not) and had they been properly labelled (far too many elementary mistakes which could easily have been corrected had someone only bothered to ask). Anyway, having got that grumble out of the way, I can honestly say that I enjoyed the show. The photos were splendidly reproduced and quite a few were new to me (always a recommendation as far as I'm concerned).

The exhibition is open until mid-January and details can be obtained at 04-8512030.

There was, of course, an official opening ceremony with speeches from distinguished guests who included representatives from the Turkish and British embassies, and also from The Hashemite Royal Court of Jordan. It all went quite swingingly, I thought; tastefully arranged alfresco on what turned out to be a balmy evening. The wine was only plonk though. I was most surprised to hear the master of ceremonies state unequivocally that, once Israel Railways had built the "New Valley Railway" from Haifa to Bet She'an, the European Union (of all people!) would fund the continuation to Irbid in Jordan. Will this turn out to be yet another bit of folkloric legend hung about the neck of the line? [Well, the EU is going to donate €280M to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip in the coming year... so maybe this is the sort of project the Extravagant Uncle would like to sponsor Ed.]

2. Next day, 23.10.05, there was another ceremony at Haifa East station. More speeches, of course, from even more distinguished guests; then the unveiling of three

new roadside plaques (in Hebrew, Arabic and English) right under the famous HR monument (see below for new translation). This time I got to meet the Jordanian representative, Dr Almajali, after the ceremonies, and we sat down for an hour or so in my office and went through some of the PR-period Trans-Jordan station layout plans from the IRM Archives. Luckily, we found something he was particularly interested in and were able to solve a puzzle that had been occupying him for some time. So this meeting went swingingly too, and I'm hoping may lead to further contacts and mutual discoveries.

3. Appended here is the full and verbatim transcript of the English language translation now displayed by the HR monument at Haifa East station:

"In the name of the merciful and clement God, blessed him alone, in prayer and peace upon the unprecedented prophet, our Lord and Master, the Emir of the believers and the Caliph of the Master of Prophets, the Sultan of the two Continents and king of the two Seas, the Sultan, son of the Sultan, the conquering Sultan Abed El Hamid Han, son of the conquering Sultan Abed El Magid Han, God gave him strengthened and supported his kingdom and will bless him with long life, as he ordered a railroad to be built from Damascus El Sham to facilitate the nation of Mohamed (God bless him) the pilgrimage to the House of God to humbly pray on the tomb of God's Emissary (God bless him), and by publishing his powerful order, God will eternalize his sublime realm, so that the railroad will extend from the city of Haifa to the Hamidi track in Hidjaz, for every Moslem who made a pilgrimage to the House of the Lord and visited the tomb of God's Emissary, to be able to humbly pray to God to strengthen and enforce his great Caliphate and put his sublime hand [in blessing] upon [all] people's heads. Inscribed in the year 1319. (On the 100th anniversary of the inauguration of the Haifa railroad station 1905-2005)".

Yeah, well, make of that what you can. I've been told this is an exact rendering of the original Turkish inscription, which is surely a slur on exactitude. I shall continue to stick to the more intelligible version presented in 9:18 and which is exhibited in the Railway Museum.

(n). Re. 70:04:(r) - 'RAKEVET HA'EMEK'.

I realise that folk are anxious to see trains running again along the old Hedjaz Railway line from Haifa, but it would be wise not to jump the gun with misleading statements. In October I was reliably informed by someone directly connected to the project that actual construction work is due to begin around April 2006. Apparently, as many as ten contracting firms will be involved, with work going on simultaneously all along the route to Bet She'an in order to speed up construction. Of course, things may change between now and then, so let's wait and see. (P.C.)

(o). AMNON GAT & TWO RECENT HEBREW PUBLICATIONS:

Readers will recall the name Amnon Gat from 65:11 and 66:12 in connection with his findings concerning WW1 military railway lines in the northern Negev Desert. Mr. & Mrs. Gat dropped into my office at the museum archives again in early November bearing gifts. The first was a copy of the academic Hebrew language publication 'Cathedra' number 117 which includes Amnon's article entitled 'Relics of World War 1 along the Course of Nahal Besor (Wadi Gaza) and Locality'. Well illustrated and well referenced, this adds relevant information to those two pieces in Harakevet 65 and 66.

Amnon also kindly presented me with a copy of another Hebrew publication, the title of which translates as 'The First World War in Palestine: Technological Innovations in the Negev and Sinai Campaign'. This was published in 2005 by Ariel Publishing of Jerusalem following the Midreshet Sde-Boker Symposium held on 28-29 October 2004, and includes another article by Amnon on 'British Dumping Grounds [ie. rubbish tips] from World War 1'. This deals engagingly with the rubbish the British army left behind: such things as beer bottles and tin cans which can still be dug up. Of more direct railway interest are three other articles. The first, by Elan Gal-Peer (whose well researched piece on part of the WW1 British 60cm gauge branch line north of Jaffa appeared in Harakevet 46:16) is entitled 'The Turkish Railroad and the Jews of the Land of Israel in World War 1'. A second article, 'History of the Ottoman Railway from Wadi Serrar [sic] to Beit Hanoon [sic]' is by Avi Sasson and Yaakov Hoster. The third relevant article in this publication is entitled 'Survey of the Turkish Railway in the Negev' and was written by Eran Fishman, Ron Tal and Eran Doron. I have not yet read these three historical articles (and others about the Negev front in WW1) so cannot state an opinion as to their worth. However, I did notice a couple of photo captions that are way off the mark! Nevertheless, it is good to see these subjects receiving publicity. (P.C.)

(p). RESTORATION AT JAFFA.
From 'Ha'aretz', 02.11.2005.

In a few weeks, a festive ceremony will launch the development work at the Menashia compound, southwest of the Neveh Tzedek neighborhood. According to the plans, when work is completed, it will turn into one of the busiest entertainment districts in the city

The work will include the preservation of the historic buildings from the Turkish period, as well as buildings constructed by the local Templers in the 19th century. Anyone who wants to eat in restaurants or fast-food joints belonging to the large chains will have to find another, more popularly-priced, place of entertainment.

About NIS 60 million will be invested in developing the compound, which for decades was occupied by the Israel Defense Forces, and served as warehouses for the Soldiers' Welfare Association and the Munitions Corps. In one of its previous incarnations, in the 1950s, the IDF operated sewing

factories there. About three years ago, the Tel Aviv Municipality asked the Defense Ministry to relinquish it. "We want to do something here that is different from what there is at the Tel Aviv port. If there the entertainment is modern in character, here we want to bring the visitors back to the past, thanks to the historical character of the place," says the chair of Ezra Uvitsaron, attorney Adi Hadar.

Ezra Uvitsaron is running the project, and is designated to run the new compound after it is built. Most of the money will be invested in the preservation of the historical buildings, where the cafes and restaurants will operate. Among the 22 buildings that are designated for preservation is a home that belonged to a family of Templers - a two-story building with an area of 1,000 square meters, which served as a brick factory, and provided the materials for construction in the center of the country. Among other things, the bricks were also used for the buildings that are now being moved by the Tel Aviv Municipality as part of the project to widen Kaplan Street. Additional attractions are a display hall with elegant floor tiles, which were manufactured in the Templer factory, and the Turkish railway station that was built in 1892, and was the first station between Egypt and Turkey. The original railway route between Jaffa and Jerusalem started out from this station.

The station was built by French entrepreneurs, and its columns, which are made of iron, are still holding one of the roofs, and their overall condition is good. "These columns remained in excellent condition, in spite of the proximity to the sea and to salinity," says the director of the project, architect Zadik Elyakim. "They were manufactured by the company that produced the steel from which the Eiffel Tower in Paris was built."

Restoration of the buildings, says Elyakim, will be complex and expensive: "A great deal of money will be invested in restoring the railway station. We will have to use the original materials from which these buildings were constructed." For example, foundations from that period will be used, in an attempt to reconstruct what was once the railroad track.

"This station reached its peak period in the early 1930s," says railroad enthusiast Chen Melling of Haifa, who helped the planners of the project to gather the historical material about the station. "During that period, the Jaffa port was very active, and the station was more relevant than ever." The train ride from Jaffa to Jerusalem took six hours, because of the many stops along the way.

Huldai can already picture the living compound. Visitors walking among green gardens, lawns, and trees more than 100 years old; tall palm trees; restored buildings, and entertainment of high quality, with less noise. "In the past, I didn't know about the place. Only about three years ago did I hear about the area. I asked to see it. I arranged a visit, and when I arrived I made my way among the thorns, which were two meters high. The warehouses were full of garbage. I understood that there was great

potential here. This place is located in the center of the city, and one can even hear the chirping of the birds," says Huldai enthusiastically. "I saw a sycamore with a huge trunk, with a circumference of almost three meters, and a ficus that may be 150 years old."

In recent years, since the IDF vacated the compound, it has been housing dozens of drug addicts and homeless people who have found a place to sleep inside the old buildings, some of which are in danger of collapse. The original stone wall that surrounds the compound has been breached by thieves, who wanted the objects in the abandoned area. Some of the painted floor tiles in the hall of the Templer home have been pulled out. What was stolen will be reconstructed, what has remained will be restored. Recently a guard was posted there, the entire area was fenced in, and trespassing has been forbidden.

The Tel Aviv Municipality and Ezra Uvitsaron claim that the final product will not be a place only for yuppies or the wealthy. They say that it will be open to the general public, free of charge. Okon says that when fairs are held there, the entrance fees "will be popularly priced, or at least reasonable." However, he says, "it is doubtful whether a shawarma restaurant will open here. We'll be running the place, and we'll keep an eye on things."

Elyakim, the project director, also denies that the place will be elitist. "It will be a unique compound in terms of its architecture and its content. The leisure-time culture will be open to everyone. When we were involved in planning, we insisted that the place be open to the general public, without an entrance fee," he says. Hadar, the chair of Ezra Uvitsaron, explains: "The general public already travels all over the world, and has become very particular. We can't offer everyone the port area in Tel Aviv, because there are people who want variety. We'll leave the discotheques to the port, and here we'll offer other things. We want to create the combination of attractions that exists in almost every European capital, with an emphasis on the historical value of the site."

According to the plans and the displays being shown by the company, private cars will not be allowed to enter the area of the compound. The planners say that walking among the restored buildings and the dozens of large trees is supposed to be a part of the experience. Ezra Uvitsaron estimates that the infrastructure work will be completed within eight months. The cost of the development work is estimated at NIS 15 million, and the building preservation work will cost approximately NIS 40 million to NIS 50 million more. "This is a virginal place, with no suitable infrastructure. We will have to bring in electricity, water, communications and underground garbage disposal units, [sewage pipes? Ed.] as is customary in the Western world, and as we have begun to do at various sites in Tel Aviv," says Okon.

Paul sent a brief note:- "A ceremony was held at the old Jaffa railway station on 25.11.05 for the start of work on refurbishing surviving historical buildings and turning the presently derelict 20 dunam area into a commercial, entertainment and cultural attraction."

(q). RISHON LE-ZION WINE CELLAR DECAUVILLE.

Back in 33:10:h Walter made mention of a narrow gauge, evidently hand-worked, line at these wine cellars which he considered was probably for moving wine barrels around. I had naturally imagined this line to be underground, but it now appears that this was not so. Chen Melling has been goofing off from his studies again to trawl through old books in the Haifa University library and came up with a photo from a book entitled "A Palestine Packet" published by the Federation of American Zionists, New York, in 1916 (no author's name given). This view shows an elevated line on stout wooden piers (a form of trestle in fact), doubtless of 60cm gauge, leading into the second storey of a building. Standing on the line are three or four side-tip wagons. Now you're not likely to be moving heavy barrels about the premises in a tip wagon (you'd need a flat wagon for this), so I'm left to wonder what purpose such a high level line served. I guess it was used to transport other essentials in the wine-making process, perhaps even the grapes themselves. (P.C.)

(r). JERUSALEM LINE STATISTICS?

The enthusiastic report in 70:04:(s) concerning overflowing trains on the Jerusalem line now looks a bit sick following a piece on ITV Channel 2 evening news on 09.11.05. This showed empty trains and an empty Jerusalem station, purportedly during what should have been the morning rush. 'Ah ha ma doots', as they say north of Hadrian's Wall. It is very easy indeed to put together a Hard Hitting Exposé based on quite little, and just as simple (and simple-minded) to argue from the specific to the general (the Great Detective - Sherlock Holmes - had something to say about that; or was it the other way round?!). TV is hardly known for its serious in-depth reportage. Mind you, the footage of empty seats and platforms did not look good, and the negative impression was made worse by some lawyer threatening to sue IR for not compensating passengers, as promised, when they arrived at destination more than thirty minutes late. (P.C.)

71:07.

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. DUBAI.

'C.R.J.' No. 142 (Summer 1995) p. 406 has the following:-

"The Dubai Government website records that there are mini-trains or train rides in several parks. A visitor in late Nov. 2004 explored the Al Mamzar Beach Park, Hamriya; Creekside Park, near Dubai Courts; Mushrif Park, Al Rashidiya; and Safa Park, Jumeira. All of these had rubber-tyred road trains. However, two of them also had real trains.

At Safa Park there was a 60cm. gauge line comprising a small loop, with a station/shelter at one end and a tunnel at the other. Inside the tunnel was a de-railed train, consisting of a steam-outline diesel loco 2-B (No. 115) and two bogie open coaches, each with 15 seats. Given the condition of the track, it seemed that this line had not operated for some while.

At Mushrif Park, which is the largest of the four and consists mainly of scrubland, our reporter found a plinthed standard gauge train on a short section of track alongside a concrete platform, with a plaque reading 'OLD MUSHRIF PAK TRAIN (1975)'. It comprises a 4w. Baguley-Drewry diesel locomotive, and two [4.wh.] wooden-bodied coaches, all painted blue. The coaches seem to have been built on the frames of goods wagons, are braked, and have builder's plates reading 'BUTTERLEY Co. Ltd. 1968, Builders, Codnor Park, Nottingham.'"

B. IRAN.

(a). LINE OPENINGS.

From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 38 p.27.

"On 22.12.2004 the Iranian President officially opened the 225km. long line from Kerman to Bam. There is not as yet a timetabled service.

Between Mashhad and Saraks the number of trains has been doubled from one each way per day to two. There are also new long-distance services - three times a week from Mashhad to Ahvaz, and twice a week from Mashhad to Qom. Between Tehran and Share Parand five new local train pairs have been added to the timetable."

(b). NOTES ON STOCK IMPORTS.

A note in "Today's Railways" 114 (June 2005) p. 57 states that the Romanian carriage works Astra in Arad recently displayed a new first class couchette coach for "Raja Passenger Trains" in Iran - one of several currently being delivered. The same magazine, No. 115 p.27, indicates the "Astra Vagoane Calatori SA" (founded 1881) is also building passenger coaches for Iran and Egypt.

On p. 18 of issue 115, in an article on Romanian railways, it is noted that the CFR was privatised as from 01.10.1998, and divided into various sectors including 'SAAF' - dealing with asset management. This sector was handed around 1600 surplus locos, 2,000 carriages and 50,000 wagons for disposal - for scrap or re-sale. It was this organisation which then sold some of the surplus Type 060-DA diesel Co-Cos to Iran, as well as to Italy, Germany and Spain.

(c). NEW 'PARADISE' DIESEL MULTIPLE UNITS.

See 70:1 - the cover of the last issue. Several German railway magazines include photos and reports of the delivery of the new "Paradise" diesel multiple units for Iran; built at Graz, they are then taken under own power to Hamburg, to be exported from the Hamburg

Süd quays. They have to travel as 'Lü' - i.e. 'Lademass-Überschreitung' or 'Wide Load' specials. The Editor saw one on trials in München (alas, he was without his camera at the time).

There are different but similar reports in "Eisenbahn Magazin" p. 13 & "Lok Magazin".

This is from "Eisenbahn Kurier", 9/05, p.15. "The delivery of the 'Paradise' (DH4-1) as first unit began the sequence of deliveries of the trains built in Maribor, Slovenia, for the Iranian railways. In 2000 Siemens got the contract for delivery of 20 such trains for the fast services between Tehran and Mashhad. Five of the four-car trains will be completed at the Siemens works in Maribor, the other 15 will be built in Iran.

The 107.4m. long, 169 km/h fast units, equipped with four 558 kW MAN engines, has a weight (empty) of 236 tonnes. Maximum axleload is 18.5 tonnes. A total of 252 seats is available in the coaches, which are laid out as large saloons. The enclosed WC system has as a special feature the fact that a European-style toilet is fitted in one end coach, whereas the others have each one Oriental-style toilet. The coach bodies are of steel. The special climatic problems of heat and sandstorms were taken into account in the design.

The formation of the trains can involve anything between three and eight vehicles. Each coach has a powered and a carrying bogie, with electropneumatic disc brakes. The air-conditioned cabs have a driver's desk built to European standards. The supervisory systems are activated by the SIBAS 32- controls.

These trains should replace loco-hauled trains over the ca. 100km. long line. The units built in Maribor and commissioned at Graz should all be in Iran by the end of 2005."

(d). MORE DANISH COACHES.

From 'Eisenbahn Kurier' 10/2005 p. 32.

Further coaches from the DSB have been sold to Iran, being transported via Austria, the Balkans and Istanbul as special goods trains. On 20/06/05 a train of 25 suburban coaches left Padborg as KCS 44983, organised by Railog Deutschland via Passau and Sopron. It comprised five ABn coaches with driving compartments, and the rest were of Bn, Bni, Bno and Bnoi types. Three other trains of DSB stock had made the same journey in January.

(e). INTERNATIONAL LINKS TO KAZAKHSTAN AND CHINA.

From 'LOK Magazin' 11/2005 p.32:- Kazakhstan, Asia's fourth-biggest country, has begun construction of an east-west rail link 2,070km. long. This should link Dostuk on the Chinese border with Iran, and traverses Turkmenistan territory for 770km. 70km. will need to be built in Iran. The line will be standard gauge and designed for speeds of 160km/h. Until now Kazakhstan's rail network of 13,600 km. has been exclusively broad-gauge, but both Iran and China have standard-gauge systems. The line would be used largely for goods traffic between Iran and China, trade between the

two having increased a lot in recent years. The line should be open by 2009, and then transit times will be reduced by some 7 days. The total cost should be around \$US 3.5 Billion, and transport volume of 55M tons per annum are envisaged.

(f). TABRIZ LOCO.

Tomas Meyer-Eppler has been to Tabriz, where he noted the locomotive pictured on the rear of issue 55. Having inspected it - it has been cosmetically restored - he has discovered it is of broad gauge. It bears a plate with text "Sormowo 27946/1904" but is convinced the engine is younger than this. He notes that he is not surprised at the lack of any progress on electrification - so long as one can purchase 12 litres of petrol or 16 litres of Diesel for 1 Euro!!

Does anyone have more information or photos of Iranian railways? Tomas is working on a book and would greatly appreciate any help, pictures, tips of any kind. He can be contacted at Tomas@Meyer-Eppler.de or: Marienkirchstr. 9b, 53757 St. Augustin, Germany

C. ERITREA

From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 38 p. 26. Since 20 March 2005 the railway has been offering a regular timetabled steam train - this departs Asmara every Sunday and travels to Nefatsit and back - 08.00 from Asmara, return ca. 12.00. Tickets cost US\$ 50 for tourists, and 100 Nakfa for locals.

D. THE CAUCASUS.

In 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 38 pp. 4 -12 is a lengthy article describing and analysing the railway systems in various Caucasian countries - Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan etc. - not the 'Middle East' as such, but some are countries which border on Iran, Turkey etc. and therefore it is relevant to see what is 'over the border'. The place-names are of course difficult to transcribe in a 'standard' manner. Translation is by the Editor.

p.4. "With the disintegration of the old Soviet Union after 1990 the three Republics of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia also gained their independence, although bitter conflict soon ensued between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the two countries which are most closely intertwined. Georgia suffered instead a long and bloody war on its own territory, where the Abchasiens and the Ossetiens wished to secede from Georgia.

Both Armenia and Azerbaijan possess territory in enclaves inside their neighbour. The province of Nachitschevan, with the city of Djulfa in the South of Armenia, belongs to Azerbaijan, whereas the region of Nagorno-Karabach with the town of Stepanakert in Azerbaijan belongs to Armenia. Even though the armed conflict has calmed down at present, the basic issues have not been resolved, and in consequence the railway links between these different areas remain interrupted. Armenia has thus lost access to a large section of its network and Georgia has no control over the lengthy stretch along the Black Sea, which means

that the important trade links with Russia are only possible via the long and difficult detour via Azerbaijan.

Only at the beginning of 2005 did high-level representatives of the Georgian and Russian governments meet, in order to discuss the 'Abchasia Problem' with a view to resolving it, so that the railways can be used through this region. In addition, Moscow is interested in establishing a 'problem-free' rail link with Turkey and Iran and the Persian Gulf. This link can only be achieved by using the line through the Georgian-Armenian region. It appears that a solution for the Abchasia situation will indeed have to be found. It would also help the totally-im-poverished Abchasia people by providing some economic progress. The first results should be visible by 2006, and Russia will provide substantial financial resources for the project."

p.5. Georgia.

"Following the independence of Georgia the railway network was transferred to the new State. The Railway was re-formed under the name Sakartwelos Rkinigsa (SR)

..... On the line to Zugdidi, at Ingiri, the former main line to Suchumi and Gagra and further on to Russia branches off - this traverses Abchasia throughout its length and has been closed because of the disturbances. According to eye-witness reports many station buildings have been shot up, and in places many rails and sleepers have been stolen. In several stations rolling stock stands and rusts, some wagons are used as accommodation."

p. 7. Azerbaijan. "The Azerbaijan State Railways, formed in October 1991 and uses the initials AZ and the English title 'Azrail'. (The country is 86,600 sq. km. and has 8.2M inhabitants - of whom a quarter are in and near Baku. The railway network is 2117 km., of which 1271 km. is electrified, but only 2089 km. is in use due to the border problems. In the first years of independence the economy collapsed utterly, the GNP fell by 20-35% and led to annual inflation of 600 - 1600%. Only from 1996 did the economy begin to recover."

p.8. Nachitschevan. "This province (300,000 inhabitants) belongs to Azerbaijan but is surrounded by Iran and Armenia. At present it can only be reached by land via Iran. The rail traffic is however modest. Because of the short distances the majority of all transport is conveyed by road, and it is only by road via Iran that one can reach Baku. Azerbaijan is therefore also very interested in maintaining good contacts with Iran. However, the railway is not totally dead. Twice a week a train leaves the provincial capital of Nachitschevan for Djulfa and from here on to the Iranian town of Jolfa. In Jolfa there is a connection to a local train of the RAI to Tabriz. At present this is the entire rail traffic on this line, and it is also technically dependent on the Iranian State Railways. According to some reports, the train has only two coaches. No-one knows how long this service can be maintained.

New Lines.

High on the planning priority list is the construction of a railway line from Astara on the Iranian border, into the Iranian town of Astara 5km. away and from there further to Rascht and Qazvin, on the Iranian line Tehran-Tabriz. This line will also be very important for Iran, for it will help access to the Caspian Sea ports. Furthermore, Russia is interested in substantially supporting the line's construction, which makes it even more interesting for Azerbaijan and Iran. The new line would have great importance - on the one hand because it will permit Azerbaijan a rail link - albeit long and indirect - to its isolated province of Nachitshevan, but more so because it will allow access to the Iranian ports on the Persian Gulf. In spite of difficult topographic conditions, which will demand many tunnels and bridges, the opening is estimated for 2009 or 2010."

p.8. Armenia.

"The Republic of Armenia is certainly the poorest Republic in the Caucasus. 29,740 sq. km. and 3,123M inhabitants. It was first absorbed into the USSR in 1922, and became independent in 1991. The long and bloody war with Azerbaijan, which Armenia technically 'won', is currently peaceful, however the relationship between the countries remains tense and the borders to the Islamic neighbours of Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan remain closed; only to the Christian Georgia are the gates open.

The Armenian Railway Department (ARD) operates a network of only 825km., of which 779km. is electrified. Only 481km. are operational at present. The gauge is 1524mm; in Akhurian 14km. west from Giumri (formerly Leninakan) is a gauge-changing installation for the transfer of vehicles to Turkey, but at present the line is closed to traffic and the border is closed."

p.12. Turkmenistan - "The State Railways are the Turkmenemiryollari (TDY), and have a network of 2644km. From Kazandzik between Ashgabad and the harbour city of Turkmenbashi on the Caspian Sea the construction of two branch lines has begun. One heads southwards to the Iranian border near Kizyl-Atrek and should later be extended into Iran at Bandar-e-Torkeman.... the other heads northwards for around 200km. to Kizylgaia in the Karakum Desert, where there are reserves of oil and natural gas. From Kizylgaia an extension to Dashoguz is planned. In the south-east of the country the construction of a transversal link is planned from the border station at Seraghjs (on the border with Iran) via Takhta-Bazar to Kerkichy."

p.10. Russia. "The RZD is intensively occupied with projects in other Central- and East-Asian states in order to secure or raise its market share over the national borders and especially into the former Comecon countries. This involvement is strongly supported by Moscow, which sees here also a chance to increase political influence.

On 1st. July 2004 a contract was signed between the RZD and the govern-

ments of Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran, whereby the RZSD will be a partner in the construction and operation of the railway link that will soon be completed between Astara (Azerbaijan) - Bandar-e-Anzali - Resht (Iran). The RZD's contribution to the total cost of the new line, which will link it not only to the neighbouring countries but to the Persian Gulf, will be \$US 170M."

E. EGYPT.

Some old notes, via Marc Stegeman. From "Cairo to Cape Town" by Reginald Reynolds, Doubleday, New York, 1955.

p.22f. On GAZA.:- "I felt that the official information issued by the U.N.R.W.A. (of which I had acquired a stack in Cairo) needed to be read very critically. Statistics missed the heart of the problem - the heart that hungered after a lost heritage. Nor could statistics convey the drabness of life in those tents, dripping, freezing or sweltering or (as I saw them) lashed by March gales. There is no statistical measurement for the hopelessness of a people with five wasted years of meaningless existence behind them and no visible prospects for the future.

I would have liked the official U.N.R.W.A. view of all this I went to see the administrator, but he was having his afternoon rest. I called back an hour or two later, and was told he was still sleeping. I gave it up.

In the hotel lounge they said to me: "Tell us the news, We hear nothing and we meet nobody. What is happening in the outside world?" Nobody passes through Gaza now, going north or south, between Israel and the sea. The strip is a cul-de-sac. You go to Gaza if you have urgent business there - that means U.N.R.W.A. officials, Egyptian officers and soldiers and an occasional journalist. Who else would have business now in Gaza? "We are cut off", said a schoolmaster. He taught in the town and had come to see me. "This is a forgotten country", he said.

"People living here", said someone, "say... the refugees are actually better cared for than the rest of the population of Gaza. Many of them wish that they were refugees." "Nobody writes about them", explained the schoolmaster. "They are what we call the economic refugees". They did not lose their homes, so U.N.R.W.A. will do nothing for them.... I was told that these 'economic refugees' were given rations by the Egyptian Government, but that they had no free supply of clothes and would have been glad even of the motley assortment with which international charity had endowed the camps. There were no industries in the Gaza Strip worth mentioning apart from agriculture. The only power loom stood idle because nobody had money with which to buy its products.

"Even if one excluded the refugees as people cared for by U.N.R.W.A. and postponed indefinitely the real problem of rehabilitation, the strip of land left to the remaining inhabitants was utterly inadequate. Meanwhile inside and outside the camps, the population continued to increase. The refugee population alone, within those

close confines, was increasing by about four thousand per annum. I have seen no figures for the 'normal' population, but on the same basis it must increase by about two thousand annually. But there was very little money left in the Gaza Strip. Gaza is a long way (eight hours on the fastest train) from Cairo; and nobody wanted to go there for a holiday. People had their own problems and it was hard to think of people whom one had never seen."

pp.36f. CAIRO.

"The Arabs have a saying: "The camel driver has a plan; but the camel also has a plan." I may remark without either originality or malice that uncertainty and delay are as endemic in the East as rush and hasty decisions are in the West. Each civilisation suffers from the defects of its own good qualities. Say we are in Cairo. We are about to leave - now - any moment. You pack up your papers and prepare for instant departure. Half an hour later people still seem to be talking excitedly in Arabic and you are no nearer to leaving. We are not going, it appears, because somebody has gone off with the car which was to have been our means of transport. You begin to settle down again to some writing. No - the car is back again. Once more you are on the alert, but this time it seems we are waiting for somebody who has disappeared during the delay. Now it is too late. The expedition is to be cancelled. No, it is not too late after all - you are ready to go? Just as you reach the car, the chauffeur, a good Moslem, decides that it is the proper time for his devotions. You sit in the car and watch while he rubs his face and hands with a dirty handkerchief - a symbolic token for the prescribed ablutions - removes his shoes and socks and wipes each foot with a sock. After this he decided that, after all, it is too late. He does on his shoon and you are off at last... But you don't know much of Cairo, I should judge, till you have shared in its idleness and inactivity..

Among the lighter episodes... was the day I got into the harem by mistake - well, not exactly into it. It happened this way. I was boarding the Metro in a hurry. The Metro was crowded and I jumped on where I saw standing space. One man was standing there and a few women, so I concluded the compartment was full and stayed on the platform outside, which was just as well. The man appeared to be trying to electrocute himself by pushing a gadget that made sparks; so I didn't interfere because it is a man's own business how he chooses to die and I knew that Egyptian students - some of them (I don't want to exaggerate) - having, by calculated indolence, ensured inevitable failure in their exams, commit suicide by pouring paraffin over themselves and setting light to it. This seemed a tidier method.

As to this man, I later surmised that he was engaged in some legitimate operation as an electrician. My mistake was to assume that he was a passenger. But for that I might have been suspicious on account of the number of women and absence of male passengers. The conductor came for my fare and I offered him what I thought was three

piastres, the usual first-class fare... The conductor gave me a long look and spoke in remarkably good English, "You should give me one and a half piastre", he said, "this is nine Piastre". How was I to know that it was a second-class compartment....?"

F. IRAQ.

(i). TRADE PROBLEMS.

From the Dutch newspaper "Het Parool", 23.11.2004, p. 27.

"Almost No-One wants to Trade with Iraq. The Iraqi Railways require ten lorries which can also ride on rails. It is a contract worth six million dollars. The Dutch firm Levantium, acting as a sort of intermediary, went to look for possible suppliers, who merely have to put their wagons onto the boat for Basra. There Iraqi personnel will deal with the unloading and deliver - no Westerner has to go to Iraq himself.

The risk seems low, and yet - no Dutch firm shows interest. Instead, the trucks will come from Germany." Arwin Baan of Levantium stated, "The needs in Iraq are so great, you can hardly list them. Food, materials, cars - they need everything there. We have limited ourselves to infrastructure, things like pipes, railway materials and water filtration, so as to be able to cope."

(ii). LINKS TO IRAN.

From "De Koppling", published by NS (Dutch Railways), 30/09/05 p.9: "Iraq and Iran are pursuing a study for the construction of new rail links between the two countries. These would involve a line in the south, between Basra and Khorramshar, and a fast route between Baghdad and Teheran. The results of the study are due in June 2006.

G. PALESTINE.

A HIGH SPEED RAIL LINK? OR JUST A NAIVE DREAM?

In the 'New York Times' for 4th. July 2005 (p. 2 of the weekly Insert in 'Der Standard', Vienna - thanks to Klaus Matzka) - is a lengthy article on plans for "Daring to Design a New Palestine" by James Bennet. It describes the project designs of Doug Suisman, an architect of Santa Monica, California, who had been approached by the RAND Corporation "as part of a two-year, \$2 million inquiry to determine whether Palestine could succeed". It is specifically noted that he is a total outsider - he had been to Israel once, in 1972, but never to any of the major Palestinian cities.

"RAND had judged that for all the attention paid to the possible borders between Israel and a notional Palestine, no one had expended much imagination on the structure of the Palestinian state. Palestine had persisted as a dream or nightmare, as an abstraction to occupy diplomats and politicians, not as a concrete challenge for urban planners. Yet both the American president and the Israeli prime minister had now called for the eventual creation of a Palestinian state. If the world was serious about a two-state solution, RAND reasoned, someone had to start planning Palestine, particularly since its population was about

to surge. The alternative - a failed, impoverished and angry ward on Israel's doorstep, if not in its living room - posed a problem, a danger, for the world.

RAND, an independent non-profit research group.... has delivered up a survey of life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that shows how far Palestinians are from viable statehood: The crippled, dependent economy, the "corrupt, non-representative and authoritarian rule", the inadequate water supply, the pressure of Israeli occupation. It has suggested a long list of improvements, which it says would cost \$33 Billion over 10 years. Steven N. Simon, one of the leaders of the RAND study, recruited Mr. Suisman, after meeting with several urban planners. Mr. Suisman, who has designed public spaces and transit systems, principally around Los Angeles, was "the most enthusiastic"... He saw the potential in a way that maybe only a naif can."

RAND... has presented Mr. Suisman's idea of Palestine to the White House, the European Union, the World Bank and others, as well as to the Palestinians and the Israelis. The idea has captured the attention, and imagination, of at least some Palestinian policymakers.

At its most prosaic, the proposal calls for a mere connecting of the dots, for a high-speed train and fibre-optic network curving through the West Bank and Gaza to link the main Palestinian cities and towns. Yet it amounts to a reimagining not only of the landscape, fractured as it is by checkpoints and army positions after years of conflict, but also of the Palestinian experience. In place of Palestinian political and social fragmentation, he proposes the most modern and swift of connections. In place of the Palestinian condition of near paralysis, he posits a state of motion. He calls it 'the Arc'. It is a glimpse, seen so rarely these days, of a reconciling land, post-occupation, post-terrorism.

.... Mr. Suisman's high-speed railway would run for 110 kilometres along the West Bank ridges, linking Jenin in the north with Hebron in the south. The railway would then slip like a fishhook through the Negev desert to attach the West Bank to the Gaza Strip, running 210 kilometres in all, and establishing the connection between the two territories that officials consider essential to a Palestinian economy.....

But when Mr. Suisman finally travelled to Israel and the West Bank this year, in February and March, he learned how few people there trusted claims of neutrality. RAND's very attempt to avoid politics made its plan politically suspect.

The problem was in the details of the plan and its packaging. Mr. Suisman was startled to come under sharp questioning when he presented the Arc to the Palestinian officials most intent on the political details, the lawyers and analysts of the Negotiations Support Unit of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Was it just coincidence, he recalled being asked by one, that his plan fit so perfectly with what she called Israel's annexation strategy for the West Bank? In fact, it was a coincidence. RAND had tried to duck

the question of the settlements. But for Palestinians, to avoid the settlements is to endorse them. Some of the lawyers thought the Arc could help Israel hold onto much of the West Bank by guiding Palestinian development eastwards, away from the boundary with Israel. One adviser said the Americans should have realised that Palestinians reflexively associated any transportation plan with systems of Israeli control.

After the tense initial meeting, some of the lawyers invited Mr. Suisman to dinner, and he tried to allay their fears by discussing ways to more tightly connect the western towns of the West Bank to the Arc. Members of the unit ultimately produced an internal response detailing pros and cons of the Arc. The lawyers were most pleased with elements of the proposal that supported Palestinian negotiating positions, including its advocacy of a West Bank-to-Gaza link.....

Nigel Roberts, the World Bank director for the West Bank and Gaza, said there was surprisingly little long-range thinking about Palestine. 'It's clearly a long, long way from where we are today', he said of the Arc, 'but you have to have these templates of what the future could look like so you can work backward from that'.

[Editor adds: Fools rush in..... It sounds just as visionary, and naive, as Herzl's "Altneuland". The difference is that Herzl and the Jews were working in a totally 'other' national and political environment, with no EU or USA or UN to back up their dreams with billions of hard currency. (On 08.07.05 the G8 leaders promised the Palestinian leadership \$3 Billion - but it was not clear what for or who was going to check how it was spent. Someone once called "International Development Aid" as "Taking money from poor people in rich countries, and giving it to rich people in poor countries.") But who knows? If enough people really believe in a Palestinian future on earth rather than in Paradise, then - as Herzl urged - the dream could become reality. It would not, however, I suspect involve TGV's as illustrating the article - they would hardly start accelerating before needing to pause at the next stop. 'Globes' on 28.04.05 published a report on the Arc scheme, which would also involve a highway and aqueduct.]

H. HEDJAZ.

(a). HEDJAZ. T.E.F.S. FAREWELL TOUR.

Some readers may recall that "To Europe - For Steam" as it was then called, (later "To Everywhere...") run by Bill Alborough of Loughborough, was one of the first organisations to run railway enthusiast trips to Syria and Jordan (and later Lebanon as well), back in the 1970's.

Bill is now retiring, after running tours all over Europe, to China, Burma and all sorts of improbable places - at one time he and I co-operated on trying to organise a trip to Israel but we failed to get enough bookings; It was left to the DGEg to manage in this at last - and intriguingly the very last tour on May 21st. - June 2nd. 2006 will be, once more, to the Hedjaz, for a total of

25 (max.) participants. By the time this is published the deadlines for booking will have passed, but for the historical record we present here - mostly in Bill's own inimitable style - the information that those interested would have used, and we hope for a further and perhaps final report in the future. The Visa information, for example, is very revealing for those still naive enough not to understand what sort of world these railways run through, and is not normally published in this uncompromising form.

Confirmed Itinerary:

— Sunday May 21st. 2006. (No meals). Royal Jordanian LHR 17.05 AMM 23.59. Arrival at Queen Alia Airport, Amman. Assistance with complicated Collective Visa procedures.

Coach transfer to Regency Palace Hotel at Amman. (2 nights).

— Monday 22nd. Breakfast / Dinner. Morning - Amman City Tour general sightseeing Coach Tour. Afternoon, Coach to Dead Sea, swimming / free time, return to Amman.

— Tuesday 23rd Steam Charter Train No. 1. (B / D). Ride / photo-runpasts from Amman Station to Jiza Station (ca. 30 miles) / ca. 4 hours.

— Wednesday 24th. (B / D). Horse-ride (10 mins). towards Petra 'Siq'. (Horse owner's tip NOT included in the Kitty.) Horse-drawn carriages available if preferred - YOU negotiate local payment plus tip.). Petra Guided Visit (the "Rose red city, half as old as time itself" including the winding 'Siq' fissure, 'Khazneh' (Treasury), Street of Facades, Court House, Ampitheatre). If time/stamina permits, YOU can proceed to the Monastery and the High Place of Sacrifice.

— Thursday 25th. (B / D). Coach to Ma'an original Hedjaz Railway Station, continue to Wadi Rum. 2 hours Jeep Tour into enigmatic lunar-like scenery, Radisson SAS Hotel at Aqaba. (1 night.)

— Friday 26th. (B / Feature D). At leisure on the beach, various water activities available at your choice / cost. (Optional visit to Jordan Potash Railway Diesel repair Workshops at extra cost). Desert Highway transfer to typical Jordanian Buffet Dinner at Kan Zeman Village (17th. century camel caravan rest station, now Restaurant / Handicraft Centre etc.) Regency Palace Hotel Amman, (1 night).

— Saturday 27th. (B / D). Steam Charter Train No. 2. Ride / photo runpasts from Amman Station to Zerqa Station (ca. 30 miles / ca. 3 hours). Coach to visit Jerash Roman City ruins (temples, endless mosaics, colonnaded streets). Assistance with convoluted Collective Visa formalities at Jordanian & Syrian borders. Cham Palace Hotel at Bosra (2 nights).

— Sunday 28th. (B / Snack lunch / D). Explore Bosra Old Town and Citadel. Coach to Dera'a. Steam Charter Train No. 3. Ride / photo runpasts from Dera'a into the Yarmuk Gorge and return; coach to Bosra. — Monday 29th. (B / L / D.) Coach to Carlton Hotel at Damascus (2 nights).

Visit Al-Hijaz Railway Station and Cadem Syrian Hedjaz Railways Repair Workshops. (Fascinating belt-driven machinery, ancient steam locos in the bushes awaiting atten-

tion). Sightseeing (National Museum, Hamidieh Bazaar, Omayyad Mosque, street called straight.)

— Tuesday 30th. (B / Snack L / D.) Steam Charter Train No.4. Ride / photo runpasts towards Serghaya and Lebanese border (all-day return-excursion) (fascinating journey through streets, climbing towards the distant mountains). Bloudan Hotel at Bloudan (1 night) - beautiful mountain town near the Border.

— Wednesday 31st. (B / L / D). Assistance with complex (and how!) Collective Visa Formalities at Syrian / Lebanese Borders. Baalbek, Lebanon's greatest Greco-Roman 1st./3rd.-Century ruins, Jupiter / Bacchus / Venus Temples. IF POSSIBLE, Hedjaz Railway Workshops, still as if their workers had only left last night (was occupied by the Syrian Army, who refused entry.... now the Lebanese Army are here....) Beautiful Beqaa Valley and Anti-Lebanon Mountains; steep descent to Plaza Hotel at Beirut (2 nights).

— Thursday June 1st. (B / L / D). Beirut sightseeing of renovated streets, Crusader-era churches, Moslem mosques. Disused Hedjaz Railway Station near the docks, several steam locos abandoned here. Short coastal drive, to ride the cable-car for an aerial view of the Mediterranean Sea.

— Friday 2nd. (B). Assistance with final gruesome Syrian Airport Border Collective Visa Formalities. Royal Jordanian Beirut 09.00 - Amman 09.55. No Visa formalities at this transit stop, change aircraft, Royal Jordanian Amman 12,15 - LHR 15.45. End of Tour.

The Price INCLUDES: Itinerary and scheduled flights with the Group, Free Group Collective Visas, all air / charter bus / steam charter rail travel with the group, twin-share Hotel accommodation, set menu group meals (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner), Entrance fees, Photo / Security Permit costs as necessary With the Group, local English-speaking Guides on Excursions With the Group. [Note the constant stress on this theme! Ed.]

Plus, in Jordan, Group Portage at the Airport upon arrival, and at Hotels, Petra Horse Ride (10 minutes maximum), Open-back Jeep Tour in Wadi Rum - 23 hours maximum; in Syria, Group Portage at Hotels.

EXCLUDED are: Portage at Hotels and Airport in Lebanon; All Airport Departure Taxes and Border Fees if payable locally on the day; All Individual Visas if arriving or departing separately from the Group; all individual travel / accommodation / meals away from the Group; Optional Excursions where offered during the tour - payable on the day. All non-specified meals and intermediate snacks throughout the Tour, Personal items (drinks with meals, telephone calls, laundry, room service of included meals, personal extra services demanded by Participants from the Local Guides, etc.) Special Note:- Tips / Gratuities to Guides, Drivers, Hotels and Restaurant staff (and a multitude of other outstretched hands demanding 'Baksheesh') are specifically excluded, so, to avoid constant cash collections and associated hassles, a 'Tips Kitty' will be shown separately on your Final Invoice. Only individual matters will fall outside this facil-

ity. Apparently US\$2 per Traveller per service per person per day is expected (e.g. changing Guides & Drivers crossing a Border entails each getting \$2 = \$8.) [An estimated Tips Kitty of GBP 75 per person was envisaged.]

VISA REQUIREMENTS SHEET. [This is quite fascinating, informative and very clearly laid out. Ed.]

INDIVIDUAL VISAS for Jordan, Syria and Lebanon are expensive and would involve YOU in considerable negotiation with all three Embassies. YOU would need to submit your Passport to each, depriving you of it for many weeks in total, perhaps just when you need it for an unexpected overseas trip.

COLLECTIVE VISAS for Groups arriving and leaving simultaneously are FREE but only if YOU submit the necessary photocopies & other relevant information accurately and at the correct time stipulated. ALL Collective Visa listings for each Traveller and Country must be prepared here. Your actual Passport will NOT be needed at ANY Embassy during the process.

HOWEVER each and every pre-condition MUST be met.

(1) Every Group Traveller MUST arrive and depart simultaneously, on the same flight.

(2) There must be NO ISRAEL STAMPS in your Passport. NOR any evidence of having visited Israel.

(3) SOUTH AFRICA STAMPS in your Passport will bar you from entering Syria and Lebanon, as South Africa remains a major supplier of arms and munitions to the State of Israel.

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY: Although your actual Passport will NOT be examined at the respective Embassy in UK it will be THOROUGHLY scrutinised page-by-page on both entry and exit from each Country. If Immigration officials discover Israel / South Africa stamps in your Passport there is a strong chance your Passport will not be returned to you! DO NOT TREAT THIS MATTER LIGHTLY. Please carefully examine your Passport NOW, page by individual page. Do obtain a new Passport if you are in ANY doubt regarding these matters!

REMEMBER - You will obtain THREE FREE COLLECTIVE VISAS if you follow the correct procedures thus saving many-times-over the cost of a replacement Passport (if necessary).

DOCUMENTS / INFORMATION REQUIRED. (1) FOUR PHOTOCOPIES of the PASSPORT YOU WILL USE. These should be clean and clear (black/white or colour, to your choice). From your Passport photocopies the following information will go onto the three Collective Visa Lists.

- Full name.
- Passport Number.
- Issue and Expiry Dates.
- Birth Date and Place.
- Nationality.

(2). Each COLLECTIVE VISA LIST seeks additional information.

In BLOCK CAPITALS (to avoid error) on a separate sheet please state

(f). OCCUPATION. (Beware, no Journalists or similar).

If 'RETIRED', please state earlier occupation (again, beware).

(g). FULL NAME OF FATHER & MOTHER (incl. MAIDEN NAME).

(This information has always been necessary on previous Tours, reason unknown.)

(3). Four IDENTICAL Colour Passport-sized Photographs. These hopefully resemble you, and your Passport photograph too....."

[Editor Notes: There are of course a few comments one could make on this programme. It is not so intensive as those of earlier years - there is more time for sightseeing and general tourist exploration; The Lebanese lines are not technically "Hedjaz" but this term seems to be applied fairly indiscriminately to anything narrow-gauge. The rules for what is included and what not clearly reflect a multitude of experiences and disputes! And the attitude of certain countries to certain other countries and even to certain professions is not 'news' to me but might be to others, and explains why the Editor has never personally yet made it to any of these tours.]

(b). ALARMIST ARTICLE. 'Lawrence of Arabia' train faces quiet demise' - an article on Yahoo News. By Ibon Villelabeitia, Tuesday July 26th. 2005.

"ABOARD THE HEJAZ RAILWAY (Reuters) - Early last century, the biggest threat to the Hejaz Railway was Britain's T. E. Lawrence and his camel-mounted Arab rebels, who sabotaged the desert track to attack trains packed with Turkish soldiers.

Today, a lack of passengers and improved highways may kill off the Hejaz once and for all, a quiet demise for a train that entered popular imagination thanks to Lawrence's war exploits, later turned into the classic film "Lawrence of Arabia." On one recent morning, only four passengers climbed aboard for the Amman-Damascus trip through Jordan's ochre deserts and Syria's fertile plains, the railway's only surviving service.

The 175-km (109 miles) journey takes two and a half hours by car, but on the Hejaz it can last anywhere from seven to ten, depending on seemingly endless delays at local stations and emergency stops to remove goats and vagrants from the tracks.

Built by the Ottoman Sultan during the golden era of railways in the 1900s, the Hejaz ran for 1,300 km (812 miles) from Damascus to Medina, ferrying pilgrims to Islam's holy sites and troops to rebellious Arab provinces under Ottoman rule.

The fabled railway has few thrills these days. Fine grit blows steadily in through cracked carriage windows, the upholstery is shredded and swarms of flies attack lunches. The toilet is a hole in a narrow carriage. But the ride also offers colorful scenes of desert life as the train clatters along at 40 km (25 miles) an hour. Bedouins herd goats and sheep grazing in arid hills. Children run out of tents pitched along tracks and wave at passengers. In Syria's Hauran region, the desert gives way to gold-coloured fields of wheat. Melon plantations thrive next to villages, where minarets and bell-towers of

Orthodox churches rise over rooftops.

PILGRIMS CROWDED TRAIN

During its heyday, the Hejaz ferried thousands of pilgrims every year. Today, it draws mostly locals and some foreign train buffs and curiosity seekers.

Along the route lie relics of the Hejaz. Rusty German- and Belgian-made steam locomotives sit abandoned on yards. Water towers stand in Ottoman-style stations, where station-masters ring bells to announce the train's departure.

"People used to travel on the train, but after cars and highways came passengers disappeared," said Abu Zabdi, a 79-year-old mechanic who has worked on the Hejaz for 40 years.

At every stop, Abu Zabdi, who said he knows every coach like each of his eight children, jumps off the train to inspect wheels, axles and hooks. "Some of these carriages are 100 years old but they run like the first day," he said proudly.

In Zarqa, a gritty industrial city north of Amman, the train made an emergency stop for a vagrant sleeping on the tracks. The man, apparently drunk, was handcuffed and brought on board by police officers.

Near the Syrian border, a group of schoolchildren accompanied by women in black veils crowded one coach. The hot air filled with the smell of round bread from their lunch boxes. Two conductors offered small, clinking porcelain cups filled with bitter dark coffee.

"I'm going to Damascus to see family. Cars are faster but here I enjoy the views," said a middle-aged passenger standing on the outer rail as the diesel engine lumbered into the city of Deraa, in Syria.

In his "Seven Pillars of Wisdom," Lawrence describes Arab troops entering liberated Damascus, where "the silent gardens stood blurred green with river mist, in whose setting shimmered the city, beautiful as ever, like a pearl in the morning sun."

The traveler who arrives on the outskirts of modern-day Syria's capital aboard the Hejaz sees a squalid and noisy Palestinian refugee camp and a garbage dump that runs for miles.

END OF CAMEL CARAVAN

The construction of the Hejaz was a major engineering project. Some 6,000 Turkish soldiers, mostly conscripts, laboured on the railway, braving hostile tribes, cholera outbreaks and sandy terrain prone to violent winter floods.

The line opened in 1908, spelling the end of the old camel caravan, in which pilgrims rode for two months from Damascus to Medina, compared to three days on the train, which had luxury cars for the Sultan and his entourage.

The military use of the Hejaz by Turkey, allied with Germany during World War One, brought the demise of the railway. Arab rebels fighting for independence led by Lawrence, an enigmatic British intelligence officer, launched demolition raids against the Hejaz.

Jordan, struggling to boost tourist revenues, has tried to revive the Hejaz with

Lawrence-themed tourist packages, but the long hours make the trip unpalatable even to backpackers. The region's turbulence also scares away visitors, officials say. The Amman-Damascus service has been cut to twice a week from four times a week due to poor demand.

Abu Zabdi said he doesn't know how much longer the Hejaz will run but that he will work until his last day. "The train has been my bread for years. The Hejaz is my home."

(c). NEW BOOK!

John Alexander writes:- "If you have not already heard on the bush telegraph, you may be interested to know that a new book has recently been published by Stacey International Ltd at UK £25.00, "The Hejaz Railway" by James Nicholson, ISBN 1900988 81X . The author described it to me some time ago as a coffee table book primarily aimed at the Saudi market rather than railway enthusiasts. It deals mainly with the building of the Railway and the war along the Railway during WW I with relatively little about the later history but it includes an appendix on the recent rebuilding of Medina station. It does not deal with rolling stock and so it may be seen as complementing Rick Tourret's book. It has about 220 photos (even including some by me!) and with such a specialised subject it is hardly surprising that about 10, mainly from the Imperial War Museum archive, were also included in Rick's book. The book concentrates on the Hejaz main line and to a lesser extent Dera'a to Haifa. Possibly inevitably much of it relates to the Saudi section. Unfortunately the problems of the spelling of Arabic place names strikes again with the spelling of many places differing from that in Rick's book. No doubt both can claim to be correct but it does tend to confuse."

The Editor has obtained a copy and can recommend it - apart from a few minor errors noted, the text provides a very readable and fluid account of the line's proposals, gestation, construction, operation, history and destiny. It is much more than a 'coffee table book', it is a lavish and well-presented history. Nicholson has done some extensive research and absorbed the results excellently. Copies can be obtained - if other sources are lacking - from Robert Humm & Co., Station House, Gresley Drive, Stamford PE9 2JN, fax. 01780-757929, books@roberthumm.co.uk - price GBP 25.00 plus p&p (which can be substantial - it is a heavy beast!).

(d). MEDINA BRIDGE DEMOLISHED.

Paul has sent details of a web site (www.menafn.com/qn_news_story) which on 20th. September included a story on a problem on the old Hedjaz route - "It was a report about an old railway bridge just north of Medina station being destroyed, by a road contractor if I remember correctly, thereby cutting the right of way. Some Saudi minister was holding forth on the negligence involved."

(e). CLOSURE RUMOURS.

From "The Sunday Telegraph",

30.10.2005, p.26. "Lawrence's hated 'Iron Camel' limps into Retirement." By Harry de Quetteville in Damascus.

"It survived sabotage attempts by T E Lawrence and bands of Bedouin tribesmen, but after a century of transporting passengers across Arabia, the celebrated Hijaz railway appears to have reached the end of the Built in 1900 to link Damascus with the Muslim holy city of Medina, its 1,000 miles of track was long-regarded as the zenith of Ottoman power and engineering skill. In the 1962 film Lawrence of Arabia, a white-robed Peter O'Toole leads Arab tribes in attacks on the railway as it ferries Ottoman troops to the fronts of the First World War. Today, however, the magnificent rolling stock that once included the sultan's personal railway car, resplendent with wood panelling and plush armchairs, has been reduced to a single dilapidated railway carriage.

All that remains open of the original line is a truncated section from Damascus to the Jordanian capital, Amman and even that is facing the axe. Jordanian officials have complained that the "tedious and snail-paced" service has become financially unsustainable, and the railway that both Lawrence and the Ottomans once considered crucial looks set to close forever. In Damascus, Syrian officials say that the journey - which takes only couple of hours by car but is a day-long test of endurance by rail - has been shunned by all but a handful of passengers. "It's very old and not many people use it now," said Adnan Ebes, the deputy manager of the Hijaz Railways. "In the past we used to run more trains on this line but now we use it for goods mostly."

The Hijaz, named after the north-west section of the Saudi peninsula that was its ultimate destination, opened in 1908 after 6,000 Ottoman navvies struggled in searing heat and shifting desert sands to get it laid. In its heyday, it ferried pilgrims to Medina in modern-day Saudi Arabia, shortening the desert journey once made by camel from two months to a mere 55 hours. The new mechanised pilgrimage became known as the "Women's pilgrimage" - for those not up to the rigours of the more traditional voyage. But to the desert Bedouin tribes that lost the pilgrims' custom the so-called "Iron Camel" became a source of resentment and financial ruin. They were the first to target the railway line, with one uprising in 1910 brutally suppressed by the Ottomans after a tribe robbed and killed passengers on one train, and ripped up a section of the track. Lawrence then capitalised on Bedouin resentment of the railway to lead them in an audacious campaign of sabotage during the First World War. By then, pilgrims using the line were far outnumbered by Ottoman troops, deployed to the Arabian peninsula. Such was Lawrence's accuracy with explosives that the price of tickets for seats at the back of the train, away from the locomotive, was said to have cost several times more than those at the front. The wrecks of locomotives still lie near sections of long abandoned track in Saudi Arabia.

In Damascus, the landmark Hijaz station, with its stain glass windows, is also in mothballs. The tracks that once stretched

into the distance behind it have been ripped up, and now books are sold in the area in front of the shuttered ticket counters. The last of the Hijaz trains leave from a station a few miles outside the centre of Damascus, where Majid Mattar, the station manager, sells tickets for about £2. "People can look at the view on the train, they can relax and have a picnic," he said. Haitham Mohamed, a regular passenger, said: "It's cheaper and more fun than the car." But while Mr Mattar boasted that the train took a mere "four to five hours", in practice the diesel engine that has replaced the steam locomotives of yesteryear usually takes about twice that. A typical journey from Damascus to Amman now takes up to 12 hours. "We left at eight in the morning and arrived at about 5pm," said Anne McMullan, from Belfast, who took the trip this week. "It blew the horn almost the whole time to warn people off the track. Once a whole market had to move off as we came through. "I can see that it's very expensive to run it for so few people but it will be a terrible shame to close it completely.""

Sybil Ehrlich has written the following in the 'Jerusalem Post', 11.2005:-

"100 years ago, a train ambled from Damascus to Haifa. Now it's coming back - this time from Jordan.

At first there was only one train a day in each direction. It moved slowly and unreliably from Damascus, carrying Muslim pilgrims to and from the holy city of Medina. But somehow the Hejaz Railway line became a legend - and not least of all because, 100 years ago last month, its rails carried the first train to steam out of Haifa and wind across the Jezreel Valley.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Jezreel Valley was an uninhabited, malarial swamp, and Haifa had only 8,500 residents. A railway in such a location might have seemed ridiculous - after all, who would use it? But it was not constructed with the needs of the (nonexistent) local inhabitants in mind. Its purpose was to provide access to the sea, and the topography of the area meant the flat land of the Jezreel Valley was the most appropriate route. The concession from the Syria-Ottoman Railway Company to build a line from Haifa was granted to a Lebanese Christian businessman named Joseph Elias and a British entrepreneur, Robert Pilling, in 1891. Construction began in December 1892, just three months after the country's first railway, from Jaffa to Jerusalem, opened. Work progressed slowly, in part because of bureaucratic delays by the Turkish authorities and a lack of finance. By March 1902, earthworks had reached only as far as Beit She'an, 59 km. from Haifa, and only seven kilometres of track had been laid. However, in that year the Turkish government paid 155,000 Turkish pounds to buy the concession for the 1,320-km.-long Hejaz Railway, which would give the railway direct access to the sea rather than having to rely on the French railway port at Beirut. This branch, which opened in October 1905, became known in Palestine, and later in Israel, as Rakevet Ha'emek, the Valley Railway. The stations were built for the railway's

convenience - where locomotives could take on water, for example.

There were originally eight stations in what is today Israel: at Haifa, Tel el-Shamam (Kfar Yehoshua), Afula, Shata (Beit Hashita), Beit She'an, Jisr el-Majamie (Gesher Nehalim), Tzemah and El-Hama (Hamat Gader). The stone buildings must have been an extraordinary sight in the middle of the uninhabited wilderness, and they have certainly stood the test of time. With the exception of Beit Hashita, which is inside the Shata Prison, and Gesher, which was demolished by the IDF to prevent its use as a hideout for terrorists, remains of all these stations can still be seen. The terminus in Haifa was a magnificent building, still standing but no longer open for passengers (although trains heading north from Haifa pass through). The station, today called Haifa East, is the home of the Railway Museum. It was not until after the First World War and the British conquest of Palestine that a line linking Haifa with Lod and the rest of the country was built.

"THE VALLEY railway brought tremendous development to Haifa. From a population of 8,500 in 1890, it grew to 20,000 on the eve of the First World War. The railway and its associated port brought trade and industry to the town, and factories and workshops were established close to the railway yards. In 1868, a group of German Templers had arrived in the town, many of them professionals at a time when such occupations were virtually unknown in the country. Engineers, surveyors, doctors, farmers and craftsmen of all kinds were instrumental in developing Haifa and "the region, and even ran road transport services to Acre and Nazareth, something that was previously unknown. Their skills were much in demand for surveying and building the railway." Afula also received a tremendous boost from the railway. In 1905, it was a tiny Arab village called "al-Fula. During the First World War, the British established an army base there, and built a branch "line southward to Nablus. [Incorrect! It was the Turks! Ed.] The plan was eventually to extend this branch to Jerusalem, but this wasn't the last time a railway plan in this part of the world came to nothing.

The modern town of Afula was established in 1924, as an urban center for the agricultural communities that were being founded in the Jezreel Valley in those years. Today, one of the old station buildings is used as a soldiers' club house, and another belongs to the youth department of the Afula Municipality. The water tower is also still standing. Moshav Kfar Yehoshua is the home of the only Valley Railway station whose buildings are all still largely intact. When the railway was built, there was no human habitation at this site, and the station was named Tel Shamam after a local mound, presumably the only distinguishing feature for miles around. After the establishment of the moshav in 1927, the members petitioned Palestine Railways to have the station's name listed in Hebrew as Kfar Yehoshua, a request that was acceded to in 1929.

Over the years, as the valley was

settled by Jewish pioneers, new stations were built to serve the needs of the population, and the frequency of trains increased. The railway entered folklore, as was the case with so many rural railways throughout the world. Noted for its slowness and unreliability, it was nonetheless a lifeline in an area with no direct connections by road. Members of the kibbutzim and moshavim in the area used the railway to transport themselves and their produce to the metropolis of Haifa, from where they could take another train south to Lod, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and even Kantara on the Suez Canal. And not only within Palestine was the line used to export goods. Haifa was the most convenient seaport for Syria and what is today Jordan, and goods were transported by rail to Haifa for export overseas. It was also possible to take the train eastward through Beit She'an and Tzemah, and three times a week, by changing at Dera'a in Syria, one could reach Damascus only 10 hours after leaving Haifa! From Tzemah, a boat service ran to Tiberias."In 1934, there were three trains a day (only two on Sundays) from Haifa to Tzemah, taking about three hours according to the official timetable, but trains rarely kept to time. However, even such an unreliable and slow railway was much better than nothing. The ramshackle railway became the stuff of legend. Old-timer Zerubavel Brakin, 85, of Moshav Kfar Yehezkel recalled that when he and his friends were children they used to put nails and coins on the tracks and watch the train flatten them. He remembers that the trains frequently stalled on the ascent near Beit She'an, and they would have to wait an hour or more for an additional locomotive to be brought from Haifa. Brakin confirmed that the stories about getting off the train to pick flowers were true: It was customary to jump off the first coach and then get back on the last one!

On the night of June 16/17, 1946, the Hagana blew up one of the railway bridges over the Yarmuk River, disrupting the service between Haifa and Damascus, which was never resumed. Less than two years later, the State of Israel was established, the borders with the surrounding countries were closed, and the Valley Railway ceased operating. However, occasional trains ran from Haifa to Afula into the 1950s.

"SOME YEARS ago, Israel Railways announced a plan to rebuild the Valley Railway. IR spokesman Benny Naor said building work is expected to start in the next few months, and finish in 2008. He said there will be five stations - at Nesher, Kfar Yehoshua, Kfar Baruch, Afula and Beit She'an. The old station buildings are to be preserved, and new ones built nearby. The projected cost of the railway is NIS 1 billion, according to Naor.

The revived railway will not precisely follow the old route, for technical reasons. It will leave the main Haifa-Nahariya line at Lev Hamifratz East. From Beit She'an the line will continue eastward into Jordan, instead of north to Tzemah on Lake Kinneret and thence into Syria, as it did in the old days. The line is planned to cross the Sheikh Hussein Bridge into Irbid, in Jordan, with the Jordanian section funded by the European

Union.

Passport control and customs inspection at the Israeli-Jordanian border is likely to resemble the process carried out on other railway systems around the world. Although the procedures of crossing the country's borders by train are a novelty to Israelis, in Europe for example, they are standard practice. In addition to the tourism possibilities that the Jordanian section of the line should open up, it will also give Jordan, whose only seaport is at Aqaba, easy access to Haifa and European markets." But the greatest immediate impact is expected to be felt in the Jezreel Valley itself. Afula Mayor Avi Elkabetz said the revived railway would be a turning point in the development of his city. The station, which he hopes will be underground, is planned to be between the upper and lower parts of the city, transforming the road linking them into Afula's main street, with a new library, conservatory and commercial center. This plan has been dubbed "the unification of the Afulas." "Elkabetz said the railway, together with Highway 6, will make travel to Haifa and Tel Aviv much easier, transforming Afula from a town on the periphery to a regional center for the surrounding moshavim and kibbutzim.

Not everyone is pleased with the decision to rebuild the Valley Railway. Eṣur Yariv, the administrator of Moshav Kfar Yehoshua, said the new route would damage the local environment, taking some 300 dunams of agricultural land. If the authorities were more concerned about preserving the landscape, it would be possible to build the railway parallel to the road, "thereby constructing what is known as a united transport corridor, he said. Arik Tapiero, the coordinator of transportation policy and environment for the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, said that SPNI is not opposed in principle to the rebuilding of the railway from Haifa to Beit She'an and on to Jordan; however, the organization believes the cost is very high, and it is concerned there will not be much demand for such transport, Tapiero said. Also, he said, the line is slated to go on a high embankment at the Yagur junction opposite the kibbutz, which will cause damage to the landscape. Today it is possible to look southward and see the Carmel mountain range clearly, but the embankment will ruin the view. In his opinion the line should be at ground level, or below ground.

Eventually, when the line is electrified - as is planned for the entire Israel Railways network - there will be a further problem of destruction of the landscape, because of the electricity poles every 60 to 70 meters. In addition, the line will be an obstacle to animals, in particular gazelles, crossing from the Carmel to Ramot Menashe, Tapiero explained. One thing is certain: The second incarnation of the Valley Railway will transform the area as much as its predecessor did." An exhibition on the Hejaz Railway is on display at the Haifa Municipal Museum, Sderot Ben-Gurion 11, until February 1, 2006. Open every day except Sunday.

I. TURKEY

(a). 1940 GERMAN COACHES FOR TURKEY.

In 'Eisenbahn Magazin' 9/2005 p.25 is a photo of a 75-class 2-6-2T on a train in Württemberg over the very steep section which once ran from Reutlingen to Ulm. The caption includes the information that the first two coaches (four-wheelers) are so-called "Türkenwagen", Type Ci-40 built by Lindner and intended for Turkey but (presumably) never delivered due to the wartime conditions. They are numbered 98074 and 98075.

Does anyone have any further information on these and other railway products - e.g. diesel railcars - for Turkey that could not be delivered?

Wolfgang Ewers has written:-

"On 25.10.1940 MAN

(Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nürnberg) received an order from the Turkish State Railways (TCDD) for six railcar sets (double-units for mainline use, which were to become MT 5201 to MT 5206). Due to the shortage of material the construction took longer than anticipated and delivery could not start earlier than 1944. Only one set was actually transferred to Turkey. Three sets were sold to the (then independent) Slovakian Railways. Two sets remained in Germany and were stored at the MAN works in Nuremberg. One of these was destroyed just before the end of the war. The other set was vandalized. In 1947 this set was acquired by the Deutsche Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft (DEG), an independent company which operated a number of lines in Germany. The two-car set was separated and the cars rebuilt into single units by adding a second cab. Both cars were scrapped in the late 1960s. From the three sets that were sold to the Slovakian Railways (and which later became CSD class M 485.0), two were (acquired? bought?) by the Soviet Railways. They redesignated them DP (i. e. "Dizel Poezd" or diesel train) 11 and 12. DP 11 was later converted to gas-turbine propulsion."

(b). OLD TRAMWAY NEWS.

Just for completeness' sake - in 'Light Rail and Modern Tramway' for Sept. 1992, p.249, are the following notes:-

"Bursa. Construction of a 60-km. light rail system was due to start this autumn. Opening is planned for 1996.

Istanbul. The first rails on the Sirkeci - Aksaray tramway were laid on 8 May. It has been decided to start operation using some light rail cars from the Aksaray - Esenler line, so stops are being built with high platforms. The extension of the existing light rail line to the airport in 1993 will cost TRL 130 million. [In view of later inflation, this would seem a bargain! Ed.]

Izmir. Expressions of interest for the design, building and operation of the light rail system were invited on 10 June. Line 1 will be from Bornova to Narlidere (23 km.) and line 2 from Buca to Egekent (27 km.).

Kayseri. This city of 500,000 has announced a TRL 200,000 million project for a light rail line after initial studies involv-

Continued on page 20

FROM THEN TILL NOW (PART 18):

Noted in reading by Paul Cotterell from Baruch Katinke's book 'Me'az v'ad Hena'; see earlier installments in 11:22, 13:17, 16:15, 19:19, 20:15, 24:11, 30:21, 38:15, 46:12, 59:15, 61:9, 63:11, 64:9, 66:13, 68:13 and 69:10. This is the chapter entitled 'Baksheesh to Save a Soul' on pages 221-222 of that book.

A few days before the English conquest I was in Kerak in the Arabian Peninsula. We heard that the English were already in Amman and had captured it, but withdrew following a strong Turkish counter attack. [This could have been 26th.-28th. March 1918. Ed.] Whatever the case, we knew that at any moment we could anticipate the final attack and capture.

I did not have even a farthing [prutah] in my pocket. I was owed two months wages. One morning, on returning in my work coach, an Arab entered, well dressed, elegant and paunchy, and handed me a note he had received from the general secretary of the local Turkish headquarters. In the note the secretary (a Turkish Lieutenant Colonel) had written to me that the bearer was in need of three wagons to transport equipment to Damascus for an important national institution. He asked me to provide the wagons as soon as possible. I asked the Arab to which important institution was the material intended. The Arab began to stutter. At that moment I came to a decision in my heart: the Arab would pay me for the wagons so that I should have some money in case I fell captive.

I told the Arab that it was forbidden for me to provide wagons to civilians. The whole railway was now working for the army alone. The Arab insisted, saying that the first secretary and the chief deputy army commander [sic] gave him permission and who was I to stand in his way? I told him to go to them and they could produce the wagons. I also told him that if he wanted to get the wagons from me then he'd have to pay me for them. The Arab left in a rage.

After just a few minutes a soldier entered my coach and invited me to come immediately to the general secretary. When I entered the secretary's office I saw the Arab standing by his desk. The general secretary turned to me angrily and said that he'd heard from the Arab that I'd asked for baksheesh in exchange for the wagons and that was a very serious crime for which I would be held accountable. I replied that I'd explained to the Arab that according to the order of the general command I was forbidden, no matter what, to supply wagons for civilian use, but he interrupted me, and in order to be rid of him I told him that if he paid me a goodly sum I might agree to do so.

No sooner had these words left my mouth than the secretary invited me to sit down and asked the Arab, and his officer aide, to leave the room. Then he turned to me, this time with a smooth tongue, and said that he understood I was in need of money, but that he could not demand payment from the Arab since he himself had already been paid for the three wagons. I answered honestly that I had always complied with his various recommendations [sic] and had never demanded anything for myself, but this time I was pressed and wished to receive, as was acceptable with him, 50 gold lirot for each coach. He agreed and said that from now on I would get 25 lirot per coach and he would keep 25 lirot. If he sent me a recommendation signed in red ink that would mean he'd already received the payment for me also, and if he signed the recommendation in blue ink that would mean I should demand all the money and then give the colonel his share.

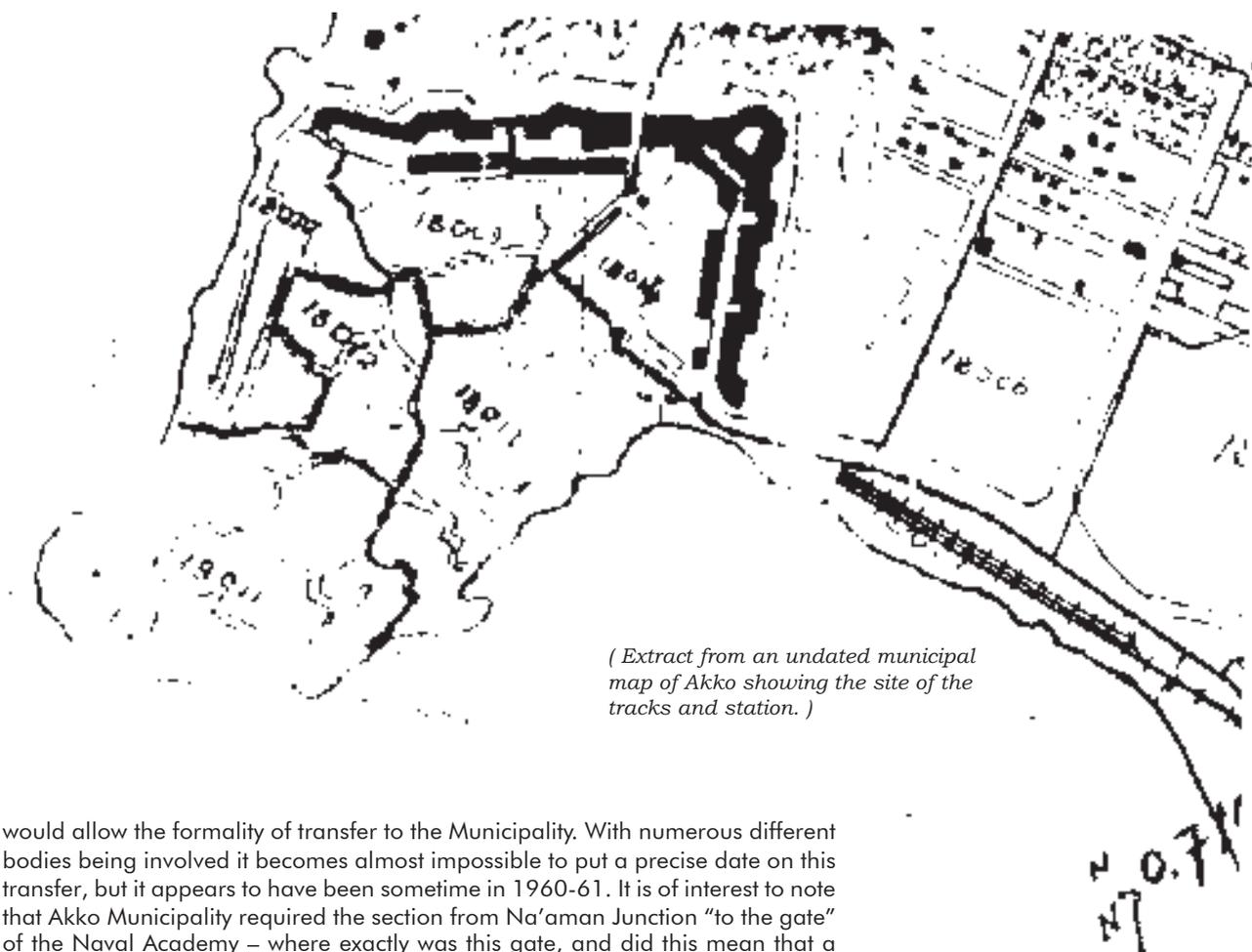
We parted in complete understanding and with a handshake. The Arab appeared crestfallen in my coach bringing me 120 gold Turkish lirot and thirty lirot in silver coin. Thanks to this money I was saved from a long period in captivity and, after not too much time, was able to return home safely.

MORE EVIDENCE ON THE LAST DAYS OF THE HR BRANCH TO AKKO (ACRE).

By Paul Cotterell.

Some slight evidence on this subject was presented in 70:13. Since then I have searched further and came up with two more files. The first is File Heh/Peh/97 which deals with "Lifting Railway Lines". In November 1948 the Acting Chief Engineer of IR requested permission to dismantle the redundant semaphore signals and interlocking at Na'aman Junction as these were needed for a signal box "at Km 46.725" on the already planned new Coastal Line from Remez Junction to Tel Aviv - this, in fact, is at Remez Junction itself (see accompanying photo). Of course, this would mean the abolition of Na'aman Junction and isolation of the remaining unused narrow gauge section to the Turkish station at Akko. There was discussion about the possibility of restarting a train service to this station, but eventually the GM, Moshe Paikovitch, gave his permission in September 1950 for removal of the equipment and abolition of Na'aman Junction signal cabin. However, while the file closes at this point, it is evident that the HR line was only cut at the junction with the rest of the 1.05 metre gauge rails to the Turkish station being left in place. The concrete skeleton of the junction signalbox still stands in 2005 as a lone reminder on the east side of the line to Nahariyya, but is in danger of disappearing when they finally get around to doubling the track.

The second relevant file, Kaf 96/69, was opened in May 1958 when Akko Municipality informed Israel Railways that it wished to acquire the strip of railway land from Na'aman (or Na'amin) Junction to the old Turkish station (by now the Israel Naval Officers Academy). This caused a flurry of internal correspondence at IR headquarters, but it was soon obvious that IR had no further use for the line and, after a deal of deliberation, eventually agreed that the land should be transferred to state ownership (the Dept of State Assets) which



(Extract from an undated municipal map of Akko showing the site of the tracks and station.)

would allow the formality of transfer to the Municipality. With numerous different bodies being involved it becomes almost impossible to put a precise date on this transfer, but it appears to have been sometime in 1960-61. It is of interest to note that Akko Municipality required the section from Na'aman Junction "to the gate" of the Naval Academy – where exactly was this gate, and did this mean that a short length of line beyond the station building was not included in the transfer? Of more interest is the fact that the rails were still in situ in 1960, as IR insisted that "the lessee" (the Municipality) should lift the track and transport all the redundant material to Haifa at its expense. The file peters out most unsatisfactorily, but the last memo of 13th January 1961 suggests that the track had still to be lifted by that date. I have no memory of any rails remaining in place when I first began exploring Israel Railways in early 1969, but I do clearly recall seeing a surviving low embankment of the Turkish formation which closely hugged the seashore around Akko Bay. When passing by train I always looked out for a sight of this intriguing relic and witnessed its gradual disappearance under a new promenade, hotel and other developments during the following decade.

I Just remembered something and rummaged around! A kind person (was it Uri Ben-Rehav?) a long time ago sent me some photocopied extracts from a Hebrew publication perhaps pretentiously entitled Thy Way was in the Sea and Thy Path in the Great Waters (Psalms 77:19), celebrating the 'Jubilee of the Naval Officers Academy at Akko, 1938-1988'. This contains a few photos showing the old Turkish station building, and one featuring the stone base of the water tower but without the two metal tanks on top. These shots seem to have been taken between 1956-65 or thereabouts: I can't be more precise as only these two dates are shown. What look very much like rails can be made out in a couple of views. This publication ran to a least 31 pages, but I only have one page of text. From this we learn that the Naval Officers Academy at Akko opened in October 1954 (having moved from elsewhere) and that the main Turkish station building was used partly as quarters for students and also as administrative offices. Not a great deal to go on, but I infer that the site must have been evacuated and all the Turkish buildings demolished sometime between 1965-69. I do not know why this clearance took place..

Continued from page 18

ing the Belgian Transurb consultancy.

Konya. With the new tramway 80 per cent complete by the beginning of May it was hoped to inaugurate the 4 km. from Cumhuriyet to Aydinlikevler this summer, and the remaining 16 km. before the end of 1992. The cost of the project is TRL 5200 Million, with Germany providing DEM 38 Million in credits."

(c). LINKS TO GREECE.

From 'LOK Magazin' 11/2005, p.31. Froim July 2005 there has been once more a direct service between Greece and Turkey. The 'Filia-Dostluk Express' ('Friendship' in Greek and Turkish) 444/445 departs Thessalonica and Istanbul around 20.00 and completes the 836km. journey in 11.5 hours, serving Kilkis, Rodopolis, Serres, Drama, Xanthi, Komotini and Alexandroupolis on the way. That is around 3 hours less than the current service. The OSE train comprises four Type T2 sleeping cars purchased second-hand from the SNCF, and still in their dark-blue livery; the TCDD set comprises six newly-built sleeping cars in the new TCDD livery of white with red and blue stripes.

GERMAN TROOPS AND SUPPLIES TO TURKEY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

From the excellent "Eisenbahnen im Ersten Weltkrieg" by Andreas Knipping. Eisenbahn Kurier Verlag, Freiburg, 2004. Translation by the Editor.

p.193. As regards the Bagdadbahn, in the area which currently forms Turkey there were still some sections missing - the crossings of the Taurus and Amanus mountain ranges. A contract between the German Foreign Office, the Turkish Army High Command and the Bagdad-Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft on 06.11.1915 created the basic agreement for a narrow-gauge line to fill the gap between Kara Punar and Durak. The technical responsibility was placed in the hands of the firm Philip Holzmann in Frankfurt (Main). The tunnel, though intended eventually for standard gauge traffic, would be built initially with a width of only 3.3m and a height of 3.8m., and would permit operation with fireless locomotives and normal standard-gauge open goods wagons. [Presumably what is meant here is that both standard and narrow gauge track would be laid and the low open wagons would pass through the tunnel whereas vans would not. WLR.] In order to accelerate the construction works, in June 1916 German Railway Troops were sent here, including EBK 5. On 01.02.1917 the 36.5km. long Taurus 'service railway' of 60cm. gauge was opened. By this time the gap in the standard gauge tracks over the Amanus mountains was reduced to only 5 km., a gap which was similarly bridged with a 60cm. gauge line. From 01.08.1917 the Amanus section could be operated through-out on the standard gauge, and work continued on the replacement of the temporary railway through the Taurus by the definitive line. However, before this project could be finally completed, on 02.10.1918 the order to suspend works came, due to the forthcoming disintegration of the Central Powers in the South-East.

Hardly any of the photographers who later travelled to Turkey or Syria to take pictures of the remaining Prussian locos there was aware that these engines, divided into boiler and chassis, once made their way on 60cm. gauge Rollböcke (transporter bogies) An engine driver recounts:-

"Let us now follow the route which a German locomotive must take, before she has fully exchanged her service in the Homeland of Germany for the war operations in Asia. Under the control of German engine drivers the locomotive is driven through Austria-Hungary, then over the Balkans till Constantinople. From here she will be placed on a ferry across the Bosphorus and runs then on the Anatolian Railway further till the foot of the Taurus mountains, that cross through the south-east of Smaller Asia. Here begin the difficulties, compared to which all the problems and waste of time until now has been a mere nothing. Both through the Taurus mountains as well as the Amanus range, which lies after the intervening Adana plain, there is no full railway, but only a Feldbahn operated by German railway troops. The German standard-gauge locomotives (around 40 Prussian G8 and 15 G5 engines for the Bagdadbahn alone) were however urgently required for those sections which had been completed south of the Amanus mountains.

There was no help for it - the German locomotives had to be dismantled, under the most difficult technical and climatic circumstances. Chassis, boiler and tender had to be separated and placed on Rollböcke and brought over the mountains on this Feldbahn.

Once the locomotives had been brought through the numerous tunnels of the Taurus and Amanus mountains - despite the frequent and unavoidable derailments on the Feldbahn caused by sudden heavy rainfall - then on the southern side they had to be reassembled. Apart from the above-mentioned locomotives, around 700 wagons also followed this difficult path."

Some of the engines being shipped in this direction for Turkey were noted at Oderberg:-
G7: 4629 Posen. 15.03.1916.

G8:		
4895 Essen	19.02.1916.	
4896 Essen	21.02.1916.	
4852 Essen	22.02.1916.	
4898 Essen	22.02.1916.	
4903 Essen	24.02.1916.	
4914 Essen	24.02.1916.	
4866 Essen	25.02.1916.	
4803	26.02.1916.	
4815 Erfurt	26.02.1916.	
4849 Elberfeld	28.02.1916.	
4920 Elberfeld	29.02.1916.	
4804 Magdeburg	03.05.1916.	
4805 Magdeburg	03.05.1916.	
4807 Magdeburg	06.05.1916.	
4786 Kassel	01.06.1916	For Cassaba Rly.
5806 Kassel	05.06.1916	For Cassaba Rly.
4632 Kassel	05.06.1916.	For Cassaba Rly.
4690 Kassel	07.06.1916	For Cassaba Rly.
4697 Kassel	07.06.1916	For Cassaba Rly.
4830 Elberfeld	20.11.1916	For Orient Rly.
4822 Elberfeld	21.11.1916	For Orient Rly.
4805 Mainz	06.12.1916	For Anatolian Rly.
4819 Danzig	07.12.1916	For Anatolian Rly.
4811 Mainz	13.12.1916	For Anatolian Rly.
4984 Essen	13.12.1916	For Anatolian Rly.

Military Operation on the Hedjaz Railway

The network and the 1050mm gauge lines of the Hedjaz Railway had come into existence independent of any link with the Turkish standard-gauge system. The main lines were (Aleppo - Rayak) - Damascus - Mezerib - Medina and branches to the Mediterranean coast to Beirut and Haifa. [sic. This description is not totally accurate. WLR] Apart from the transport of pilgrims to Mecca it also served, from the beginning, Ottoman Imperial interests. In 1917 German Railway Transport Departments in Aleppo and Damascus took over the control. The EBK 11 (Eisenbahn Betriebs Kompanie) and the Railway Double-Company 34/48 took over the further extensions. The capacity of this very important line for Palestine was dependent on the deliveries of coal and other materials over the Taurus Feldbahn. Apart from the Prussian G8, other items carried over this 60cm. gauge line included also 20 locos from Hartmann, Henschel and Borsig for the Hedjaz Railway, in dismantled form."

DISPUTE BETWEEN THE ISRAELI ARMY & THE BRITISH ARMY.

By Paul Cotterell.

This is the title of File Kaf/51 in the IRM Archives and, of course, is too intriguing to pass up. Not that it contains much; just one solitary letter. This was written on 23/6/1948 by Moshe Paikovitch, Israel Railways' first General Manager, and it is addressed to Mr. N.L. Lifshitz at the Transport Ministry, Sarona (Tel Aviv). The following is a faithful translation of the letter.

"Subject:- Access for locomotives to Haifa Port area.

I have to inform you that as a result of a regrettable incident of dispute between the Israeli army and the British army, a dispute in which railway employees were involved, the British army forbids access to IR locomotives and trains to the Haifa Port area.

This will cause a great loss to our work and I am doing all I can to improve the situation and hope that the British withdrawal will conclude soon and make it possible for us to return to normal working conditions.

I will inform you of details of the incident by word of mouth when you are in Haifa."

Unfortunately for us, Paikovitch seems to have considered this donnybrook too sensitive for committing to paper, so we do not know the juicy details. By the sound of it, more than strong words were exchanged and a resort to fisticuffs may have been made – tut, tut. This letter is just about the only surviving evidence known to me of that twilight period between Israel's Declaration of Independence and official British withdrawal, and the exit of the very last British soldier.

This issue is the last of the present series and subscribers will find a renewal form for the next series (#19) included in the envelope.

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From Aharon Gazit, 2 pictures of RAMTA trains (further to the press release about handing over the first double-deck train entirely assembled at RAMTA)



*Back Page.
Night time at Haifa East depot. First generation Alstom Bo-Bo 738 and the Big Hook.
13th. June 2001. (Photo: Paul Cotterell.)*

