

HaRakevet

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הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
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73:1. At Gasim, between Dera'a and Neesib, 5km. south of Dera'a, Syrian Hartmann centenarian 2-8-0 No. 91 built 1906 prepares to take special train along the Bosra branch in October 2005. (Photo: Robert Humm).

EDITORIAL.

It can hardly be said that all news emanating from the Middle East is positive and peaceful, but once again this issue includes several items (thanks mainly to Aharon Gazit) showing how in Israel a large amount of investment in civil infrastructure is being made, for the long-term benefit of the entire country - new lines, new stations, new services, new stock. Politically there are as usual 'changes at the top' but this does not affect the progress being made. However, we include two long reports on travels in Iran, and from Turkey through Iran to Pakistan - modern odysseys through countries which most readers of 'Harakevet' will be unable to emulate for themselves and which indicate the current state of affairs. Bill Alborough has also provided a brilliant view into the realities of organising railtours in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. So it can be said that we have a very good geographical spread in this issue! But thanks to Paul and others we have some historical items as well.

The Editor's life goes through yet further turmoils. It is never boring, that is the best that can be said - but we hope to maintain 'Harakevet' and its continuity and its standard - even if, as currently appears, the address on the masthead may have to change again..... In the meantime, Enjoy!

The Editor.

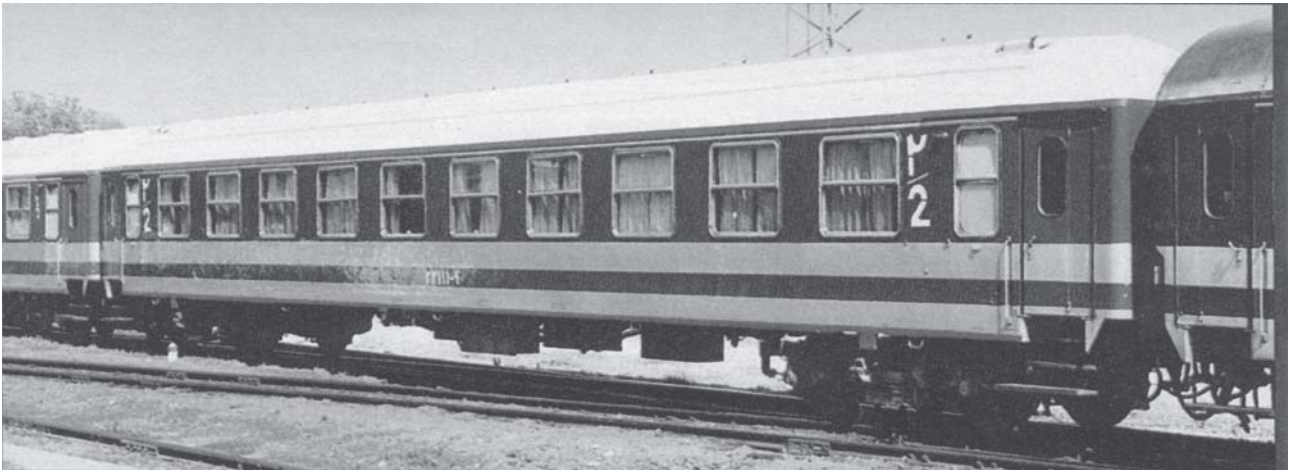
(ii). CARRIAGES FOR DISABLED TRAVELLERS.

From a press release of 28.05.06 by the Transport Ministry:

Mr. Mofaz told the press that today, i.e. 28.05.06, that the first double-deck carriages equipped with electrically-operated entry ramps and special toilets for the disabled entered service. Each carriage has 100 seats; the disabled area is spacious, and an emergency calling system is installed near the special toilets. 29 such carriages have been ordered at a cost of \$58 million,

The cars are built at Bombardier at Goerlitz in Germany and final assembly is carried out at Ramta at Beer-Sheva; Delivery is to be completed by September 2006.

(iii). NEW SIEMENS COACHES.



73.3. (Photo). Iran: Second Hand Coaches from Denmark. Before the Cartoons and the Dairy Products Boycott Scandal - a photo of one of the 52 former DSB coaches purchased by RAI and transported through Germany Austria, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey to Iran. (Photo by Thomas Meyer-Eppler, from 'Lok Magazin' 12/2004.)

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(i). NEW ROLLING STOCK. (Notes from Evyatar Reiter).

a). Two new Bo-Bos were landed from the 'Severnaya-Dvina' (formerly 'Queen-See') at Qishon Port on 26/03/06. Running numbers are 767 and 768. Their builder's plates show they were built by Vossloh, this German company having taken over Alstom. Builder's numbers are 2295 and 2296, and both locos are dated 2006.

b). Another pair, nos.769 and 770, were due to arrive in mid-April along with eight double-deck coaches. Two more Bo-Bos (771/772) were due in May. A contract for a further six Bo-Bos (773-778) was due to be signed in early April.

c). Also on 26/03/06 IC3 set no.21 was unloaded at Ashdod port having returned from repairs in Denmark.

d). A previously unknown Israeli company called Millennium Railway Services Ltd. is reported to have signed a contract in April to provide I.R. with 77 (second-hand?) bogie flat wagons from MFI in France at a price of 20 million Shekels. They are to be used for the transport of containers.

Noted in "Eisenbahn Revue" 5/2006 p. 246: Israel Railways has ordered 86 passenger coaches from Siemens at a cost of 125M Euros. Should all the other options for up to 585 coaches be taken up, the total value would come into the Billion range., This is Siemens' second major order in the current year. The coaches will be built for 160km/h operation in push-pull mode in Inter-City and local traffic. Each train will consist of nine centre coaches and a Generator/Driving coach. Siemens offices in Vienna and Graz are responsible for the engineering and project management, Siemens SKV in Prague will do the construction work. Deliveries are planned from the end of 2007 until mid-2009."

(iv). G12 IN ACTION.

In March 2006 G12 108, resplendent in a sparkling new coat of paint, was working the Haifa port traffic. It is presumed the regular "Yo-Yo" was undergoing maintenance. By the

end of the month, however, 261 was back on the job.

(v). FLYOVERS ON THE AYALON LINE.

The railways, through their subcontractors have started building three railway bridges over the 3-track Ayalon line as well as over road No. 1 (to Jerusalem) in order to connect Hahagana station of Tel-Aviv with the line to Rishon-Le-Zion West; the cost of the project is \$5.4 Million and it is actually the northern and first stage of the line; simultaneously, the Ayalon Highways Company has published a tender for realigning road No. 20 (to Rishon-Le-Zion, Holon, and Bat-Yam) near Holon in order to clear the corridor in the median of the road for the line to Rishon-Le-Zion West.

(vi). NEW AGREEMENT WITH CONTRACTORS.

The Railways signed on 02.04.06 on a common treaty and a comprehensive agreement with the Association of the Israeli Subcontractors, which will be utilized in all future tenders to be published by the railways; This is the first treaty to be signed between any governmental company and the association.

Within the treaty, the Railways recognize the Association as the sole representative of the subcontractors, and particularly those involved in Infrastructures; the Association, in return, has taken a commitment to assist the railways in various processes generated by the agreement.

Both sides further recognize the need for and advantage of contract agreements, fair and balanced, as a precondition to successful implementation of projects.

The I.R.General Manager, Mr. Linchevsky, who signed the treaty, said that the railways are publishing 400 tenders annually, worth \$1 billion.

Six international groups have passed the pre-qualification stage of the tender for boring the tunnels on the A1 fast rail link to Jerusalem at a total length of almost 17 km. The cost of the whole project is estimated at \$853 million, of which \$213 million have already been spent.

(vii). PEDESTRIAN OVERBRIDGE AT NAHARIYYA.

From a press release of 03.04.06 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Works on building a pedestrian overhead bridge at a cost of \$1.28 Million have started today at Nahariyya. It will cross Road No. 4 and the railway line, and will give pedestri-

ans a safe passage between the eastern and western parts of the city. The railway line is considered as the "border" between the two sections. Works will be completed towards the beginning of 2007.

Mr. Linchevsky said: "Safe travel, the safety of travellers, and of pedestrians crossing the tracks, are our top priority, and we're heavily investing in it without neglecting the environment."

(viii). CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN.

The railways will start on 03.04.2006 with the so called "Passover Cleaning Operation" to remove heavy waste materials accumulated along the tracks; it is part of the railways' commitment for keeping nature and environment clean and giving the tracks an aesthetic image.

The operation, which will start at the station of Herzliya, will include the stations of Tel-Aviv, Hadera West, Beer-Sheva, Dimona, Lod, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Haifa, Shefayim, and Atlit. The operation, which will cost \$426,000, will be carried out by the railways' Infrastructures Department who will operate heavy engineering equipment.

(ix). DEMOGRAPHIC PASSENGER SURVEY.

The railways have started a new and interesting initiative: "If you want to find a partner (male or female), go by train!" This is a slogan used in a press release of 05.04.2006:

A special survey was made by the railways, in which 2,213 passengers were asked about their habits - varied also in terms of rush hours, low traffic times, lines, stations, and days of the month, and from this one can draw up the demographic character of the passengers:

57% are bachelors (singles), as compared with 20% in the general population; 46% are females and 54% males.

If parents are looking for a bride or bridegroom according to their education, 44% are academician, while 52% have finished high school, college, or Yeshiva (a Jewish orthodox high school).

Dividing the passengers from the religious point of view: 62% are secular, 27% are conservatives, and 12% are religious.

41% have been using rail constantly for more than 2 years; 18% started using rail constantly from a year or two ago; more than 16% have

started to use rail constantly during the last three months before the survey took place; this reflects the sharp rise in passenger traffic during 2005.

The Railways General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky said: "We are pleased at the trust the public is given us, and are confident that passenger traffic will keep rising. We continue to do our best for the passengers' welfare and service improvements, amongst other ways by mapping the needs and characteristics of passengers".

(x). PASSOVER 2006 EXTRA SERVICES. From a press release of 10.04.2006 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"During the Passover holidays (12 to 19.04.06) additional trains will be in operation, based on accumulated experience from the past and the operational possibilities.

On 12.04.06; 14.04.06; and 18.04.06, 4 additional trains are to be operated:

From Beer-Sheva Central to Kiryat-Motzkin departing at 09:13; 2 trains from Tel-Aviv Hahagana to Kiryat-Motzkin departing at 11:40 and 12:40 respectively; From Kiryat-Motzkin to Tel-Aviv Hahagana departing at 11:42.

On 13.04.06; 15.04.06; and 19.04.06, an additional train from Kiryat-Motzkin to Tel-Aviv Hahagana departing at 21:13.

During 16.04.06 and 17.04.06 (regular working days), the following additional trains are operated:

2 trains from Ashkelon to Haifa Central departing at 09:42 and 10:40 respectively.

2 trains from Haifa Central to Tel-Aviv Hahagana departing at 12:28 and 13:28 respectively.

1 train between Rehovot and Haifa Central (instead of Binyamina) departing at 09:40.

1 train between Ashkelon and Binyamina (instead of Tel-Aviv Central) departing at 09:21.

1 train from Haifa Central (instead from Binyamina) to Ashkelon departing at 11:38.

2 trains from Ben-Gurion airport departing at 16:23 and 17:23 respectively; these trains calling at Beit-Yehoshua, Netanya, and Hadera West in addition to their regular calls.

On 16.04.06, the train between Kiryat-Motzkin and Rehovot departing at 06:40 is extended to Ashkelon.

On 17.04.06, the train between Binyamina and Rehovot, departing at 08:56 is extended to Ashkelon."

(xi). PESACH STATISTICS.

From a press release of 20.04.2006 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"During Passover holidays (12 to 19.04.06), 600,000 passengers were carried; more than 50% higher compared with average traffic; on the Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem line, 30,000 were carried; the record was on 17.04.06 when 20,000 were carried."

(xii). MOD'IN LINE PROGRESS.

Good news from the line to Modi'in: in early April the first of two bored tunnels, each about 100 m long intended to by-pass ancient graves found on the original alignment, has been completed; the second is in an advanced stage; these two tunnels have caused the main delays in opening the line, and it is hoped that upon completion of the second tunnel the work will be expedited.

The District Council for Jerusalem and the center of Israel published in the last week of April announcements which mean handing over to the government the national plan No. MD/34 for the fast link A1, between the deviation from the line to Modi'in and Jerusalem; the main issues are rights of way, including stations, land strips, changes of land uses, structures, etc. Objections are valid for 60 days from publishing the plan. (Note: - this refers actually only to the curve from Modi'in to Jerusalem (1 km west of Modi'in Outskirts station) to enable trains from Modi'in to join the A1 link; of course it does not refer to the section to Jerusalem already in construction.)

(xiii). NEW AIRPORT LINK.

A short but essential rail link between the line Ben-Gurion airport - Modi'in and Jerusalem and Lod, has been recently completed, and will probably be soon in operation, once the short section from the airport to the turnout is laid; this means that it may work one year before the line to Modi'in is open.

The importance of this link (from km. 106.5 on the Lod - Rosh HaAyin line to ca. km. 10.0 on the Tel Aviv - Modi'in line) is that it connects the airport not only with the central and north of Israel, but also with the south and east, enabling the people of Jerusalem and Beit-Shemesh (using services on the rebuilt original line), Beer-Sheva, Dimona, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Yavne, Rehovot, Rishon-Le-Zion, Lod, and Ramla to enjoy direct rail links to the airport.

The new 1.2 km link merges with the Rosh-Ha-Ayin-Lod line (currently used for freight only) about 2 km north

of Lod station.

(xiv). AIRPORT SERVICES TO BE WIDENED.

From a press release of 29.05.06 by the Transport Ministry:

Mr. Mofaz told the press that towards the end of 2006, the people of the south (he forgot to mention those of Jerusalem using the rebuilt old line, but they are included too!), namely Beer-Sheva, Dimona, and Ashkelon, will enjoy a direct rail link to Ben-Gurion airport as a result of completing the short but vital rail link between the Ben-Gurion Airport - Modi'in (and later A1 to Jerusalem) line, and Lod; Mr. Linchevsky said that the people of Sderot, Netivot, and Ofakim - to whom a 70 km double-track line connecting them with Ashkelon on the north-west and Beer-Sheva on the south-east is under construction - will also enjoy the new link.

Generally, a lot of time will be saved; currently, people arriving from the south, as well as from Jerusalem, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and other points on the line to Lod, have to disembark at Tel-Aviv-Hahagana station, wait here for a train to the airport coming from the north, and then retrace part of the way back by this train.

(xv). LEVEL CROSSING INSPECTORS.

From a press release of 23.04.2006 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The Railways have put traffic inspectors at the following 21 level crossings where drivers used to violate the law, crossing the tracks when red flashing lights and alarm bells are activated and even breaking the barriers' arms.

The sites are: Bnei-Brak, Kiryat-Motzkin, Air Force Technical School Haifa (Kishon junction near the railways' workshops), road No. 4, Zikhron Yaakov, Pardess-Hana, Hadera, Kfar Vitkin, Kfar-Neter, BeitYehoshua, Shefayim, Rishpon, Hertzliya-Kfar-Shmaryahu, Lod (near the station), Ramla, Tzrifin-Ramla, Beer-Yaakov-Ramla, Beer-Yaakov-Netzer-Sereni, Rehovot, Bnei-Darom, Ashdod-Ad-Halom, and Sorek.

The railways' General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky, said: "During 2005 alone 950 barriers' arms were broken by impatient drivers; this is almost 4 times more than the number of barriers, at 250; this phenomenon is unique to Israel, and putting the inspectors in place is part of the plan to fight against it"."

(xvi). SAFETY - NEW STAFF APPOINTMENTS.

From a press release of 24.04.2006 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The Directorate will promote the improvement of the safety systems; Last month the directorate approved the appointment of Mr. Amos Gelert as Deputy General Manager for safety, quality, and environment. Yesterday, the directorate approved the organizational structure of the Safety & Quality Department and instructed Mr. Gelert to accelerate the intensive activity, thus preparing the railways towards qualification to ISO standards for safety, quality, and environment.

Adopting the ISO standards is a breakthrough for the railways, regarding the improving and strengthening their abilities and providing a comprehensive and professional answer for safety and quality.

The Chairman of Directorate Mr. Moshe Leon said: "The ISO qualification is a long and intensive procedure, however, it is one of the most significant changes that the railways are undergoing, while preparing themselves for growth according to the 5-year plan, putting safety at top priority; I have no doubt that the appointment of a Deputy General Manager for Safety will bring a significant advance and development of the railways' safety and quality".

The railways' General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky said: "The railways are intensively acting to promote safety, with the ambition of becoming one of the leading companies working according to ISO standards".

The activity of improving the safety system, as well as creating the safety department, is led by the British firm Touchstone Renard in cooperation with the Israeli firm Kav-Project (Project Line)."

(xvii). DIRECTORATE VACANCY.

The Railways are functioning from 01.05.06 without a Chairman of Directorate, due to the fact that the appointment of Mr. Moshe Leon has ended after 3 years in his job; the Legal Council has decided not to approve new appointments as long as the new government has not yet been introduced (which will happen tomorrow 04.05.06); Mr. Moshe Leon said: "I intend to run again; In my time the railways grew significantly, and I hope that the transition time will be as short as possible".

Meanwhile, it has been decided that at every meeting during the transition time, a temporary chairman will be appointed at that meeting."

(xviii). ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF RAILWAYS, AND FUTURE PLANS.

From a press release of 07.05.2006 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

The railways' General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky, the General Manager of the Ministry for Environment Dr. Miki Haran, the General Manager of the Nature Preservation Society Mr. Gershon Peleg, the General Manager of the Society of Nature and National Parks (2 competing bodies!) Mr. Eli Amitai, as well as activists for environment, sat together about 10 days ago in a forum to discuss the bilateral relations between the railways and the environment. These efforts towards cooperation in preserving the environment hand-in-hand with the accelerated development of the rail network, became a reality thanks to a one-day conference under the title "Bilateral relations between railways and environment" which took place a month ago.

During the conference participants said that the main emphasis should be the coordination of the Railways' development programme with the environmental factors as far as possible, before the discussions on the projects will start at the Authority for National Infrastructures.

During the forum, discussions were held on two rail projects, the alignments of which pass through environmentally-sensitive areas:

- 1. A 4th. track on the Ayalon railway line, while the alignment of the Ayalon river will be diverted directly to the Mediterranean Sea, thus enabling the gorge to be totally dried out.

- 2. Revival of the so called Eastern Line (the historical Lod - Rosh-Ha-Ayin - Kfar-Sava - Hadera to Haifa) by rebuilding the abandoned section between Kfar-Sava and Hadera East and connecting it with Afula (on the old Hedjaz line currently being rebuilt), thus making it the backbone of the railways' freight traffic.

Mr. Linchevsky said: "The Railways are devoting their efforts to nature preservation and environment, hand in hand with the development plans being implemented; cooperation and deepening of coordination in future will continue, and this is for us of great importance".

Dr. Miki Haran praised the railways for changing the tendency in favour of environment, while adding that the Ministry of Environment will closely follow up the railways to ensure that environment standards are kept at the project.

Mr. Amitai told the press that the Authority for Nature and National Parks together with Israel Railways, have succeeded in establishing working meth-

ods, the aim of which is to minimise the damage to nature and landscape during the building of rail infrastructures.

(xix). NEW TRANSPORT MINISTER.

On 07.05.2006, the new Transport Minister (for how long?...) Mr. Shaul Mofaz entered his job, succeeding Mr. Meir Shitrit. Mr. Mofaz, who was formerly the Minister of Defense, and before that the Israeli Defense Army Chief of General Staff, said that the top priority is reducing the number of accidents on roads.

Mr. Shitrit, who has now become the Minister of Construction and Housing, said that "Although the new Prime Minister Mr. Olmert spoke privately about reconsidering the continuation of building the A1 fast link to Jerusalem due to the high costs, it is unthinkable that Jerusalem will not be linked with Tel-Aviv by a fast rail service covering it in 28 minutes"! Works, by the way are continuing at full tempo.

(xx). THE NEW TRANSPORT MINISTER.

From a press release of 09.05.2006 by the Transport Ministry:

The new Transport Minister Mr. Shaul Mofaz has told the press that completing the Law of the National Authority for Roads Safety and making the railways into the main mean of transport are his top priorities; He added that he wants also to build LRV networks in the big cities.

He further promised to make his first visit as a Minister to Israel Railways, and he did so few days later, during which he visited construction sites on the line to Jerusalem (A1) near Modi'in. Here he stated that, despite all the rumours, this line has reached the non-reversible point and will be completed as planned.

(xxi). SAFETY AND LEVEL CROSSING ISSUES.

From a press release of 21.05.06 by the Transport Ministry:

Transport Minister Mr. Shaul Mofaz has instructed Mr. Linchevsky to crystallize within a month an overall programme for increasing safety level on trains, along rail alignments, and reducing the vandalism of car drivers at level crossings.

He further instructed Mr. Linchevsky to shorten the schedules for building grade separations as well as accelerating the removal of statutory barriers delaying the implementation.

Mr. Mofaz added that the sharp rise in rail traffic during last years has increased the probability of collisions,

which requires special treatment regarding safety; He added that on each new line, the emphasize will be on safety.

Here we come perhaps to the most interesting part: Mr. Mofaz has instructed Mr. Linchevsky to check the possibility of replacing the current level-crossing barriers made of Aluminum with barriers made of a harder material, in order to prevent their being broken by violent car drivers; cynics have already said that perhaps he'd like to implement his military experience (He was the Chief of General Staff, and later the Minister of Defense!) by installing anti-tank barriers!

He also asked the railway experts to check the possibility of increasing [sic. - he probably means decreasing] trains' braking distance to avoid collisions - has Knorr anything to offer?

(xxii). FARE REDUCTIONS TO JERUSALEM.

From a press release of 10.05.06 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

With the government policy and in cooperation with Israel Railways, it has been decided to encourage train usage on the Beit-Shemesh - Jerusalem line by reducing fares by 50% to \$1.11 only.

As a result of the decision, which was taken 4 months ago, passenger traffic has tripled; in order to further encourage passengers, the reduction has been extended to the end of June 2006.

According to the railways, traffic reached a monthly average of 16,000 between January 2006 and April 2006, compared with a monthly average of 5,000 between October 2005 and December 2005. The General Manager Mr. Linchevsky said: "After checking the influence of a price reduction on the traffic on this line, we've found it right - together with the Finance and Transport Ministries - to continue with the policy; it has proved itself by tripling the traffic; we do our best to make the railways accessible to all parts of the public, and with activities like the fare reductions, which are included in the subsidies agreements, we'll succeed in this important mission".

(xxiii). FARE CONCESSIONS FOR THE DISABLED.

From a press release of 24.05.06 by the Transport Ministry: Minister Mofaz announced that from today, 24.05.06, all the disabled will enjoy fares reduction of 10% on the interurban railway lines; Until now, only

those disabled while in the army or due to terrorist events have enjoyed this reduction, while blind people travel free, and their escorts (probably not the dogs!) enjoy 50% reduction; Pressure from the Disabled organizations brought about this reduction for all categories.

Mr. Mofaz told the press that fares reduction for the disabled are part of the efforts made by the Ministry to integrate these people in the society. Mr. Linchevsky told the press that the Railways continue with their efforts to improve accessibility for the disabled, adding that soon special carriages with electrically-operated ramps will enter service to achieve these efforts.

Additionally, it has been decided to add the lines: Binyamina - Haifa, Kiryat-Gat - Beer-Sheva, and Kiryat-Gat - Tel-Aviv, to the list of suburban lines, thus enabling their passengers to enjoy the use of seasonal tickets, like 'Weekly Free' and 'Monthly Free'.

(xxiv). TRANSPORT MINISTRY - NEW GENERAL MANAGER.

The Government approved on 30.05.06 the appointment of Mr. Gideon Siterman for the General Manager of the Transport Ministry succeeding Mr. Arie Bar. Mr. Siterman, 52, married and with four children, is a senior accountant, and has a rich experience in finance, trade, business, management, stock exchange, and transportation.

73:05. ISRAEL RAILWAYS TENDERS:

Most important!

(i). Tender No. HN/KB/08/06: Fast link A1 to Jerusalem; Binyanei-Ha'Uma (new Jerusalem Central railway station) upper station; excavation and walls works. Works include: earth works, demolishing and dismantling, wall works and excavations, cast concrete, sealing, installing temporary lighting system and dismantling existing infrastructures, frameworks, pavements, and sewage. Implementation time: 7 months. Latest bidding date: 11.04.2006.

(ii). Tender No. SN/SR/0/06: Framework agreement for selling, promoting, and producing various events for the railways as per request. The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 23.04.2006.

(iii). Tender No. HN/KB/05/06: Infrastructures works for double-tracking and upgrading Section-B km 21+000 to km 31+125 of the Na'an - Beer-Sheva line.

Works include the following structures: Structure 01: infrastructures works. Structure 03: a railway bridge over Govrin river at km. 26+692. Structure 04: a railway bridge over Lakhish river at km. 30+000. Structure 05: 2 security rooms. Structure 06: an option for laying mono-block type concrete sleepers and different kinds of rails along the alignment. Implementation time: 26 months in stages. Latest bidding date: 08.05.2006.

(iv). Tender No. HN/KB/06/07: Carrying out acoustic walls; landscape rebuilding, and various works along Ashdod - Ashkelon line. Works include: earthworks, landscape rebuilding, acoustic walls, gardening, and infrastructure. Implementation time: 10 months. Latest bidding date: 14.05.2006.

(v). FIBRE OPTICS. RFI - Request for information:

Israel Railways Ltd. wish to get information in purpose of preparing a tender for leasing/hiring relays and data transmission services, by using the railways' communication and fibre optic infrastructure, and would like to check with such services' operators the needs, conditions, and business models suitable for that purpose. Latest date for response: 18.05.2006

(vi). Tender No. HN/KB/10/06: Building an acoustic wall at Kiryat-Haim (near the railway station and along the line). Works include: earthworks, cast concrete, pre-cast elements, sealing, painting, drilling and piles, water and sewage lines, etc. Implementation time: 5 months. Latest bidding date: 24.05.2006.

(vii). Tender No. TM/SR/08/06: A contract for killing weeds along railway lines, at stations, and at other railway sites. The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to additional 48 months. Latest bidding date: 28.05.2006.

(viii). Tender No. MC/KB/04/06: Upgrading works at Haifa East IC3 depot.

Works include: dismantling lighting elements, delivery, installation and/or replacing lighting elements, additions and repairs on control boards, and checking by an authorized electrician. Implementation time: 3 months. Latest bidding date: 31.05.2006.

(ix). Tender No. MC/KB/05/06: Rebuilding a concrete fuel tank at Haifa East loco depot. Works include: earthworks, concrete, painting and plating, framework, dismantling and preparatory, cables and development. Implementation time: 3 months. Latest bidding date: 30.05.2006.

(x). Tender No. MC/KB/06/06: Wall works and drainage of fuel tanks at Haifa Kishon works.

Works include: earthworks, cast concrete, framework, demolishing and dismantling, water and sewage pipelines. Implementation time: 3 months. Latest bidding date: 30.05.06.

(xi). Tender No. MC/KB/03B/06: Building a refuelling complex at Ashdod Port classification yard.

Works include: earthworks and area preparation, manufacturing and installation of a 50 kilolitre capacity fuel tank as per API standard, concrete works for foundations and platforms, construction and sheet metal works for building and installation of a pump house and a discharging amenity for road tankers, a system for discharging fuel, a refuelling post for rolling stock, a control system for fuel stock management, installation of a mobile structure, electrification, communication, pipeline works and equipment installation. Implementation time: 8 months. Latest bidding date: 12.06.06.

(xii). Tender No. NO/SR/07/06: Providing information services for passengers by phone. The contract is for 24 months with optional extension by up to additional 12 months. Latest bidding date: 15.06.06.

(xiii). Tender No. MH/SR/13/06: Framework agreement for providing installation and repair services of data communication all over the network. The contract is for 24 months with optional extension by up to additional 12 months.

73:06.

LRV PROJECTS:

(A). Jerusalem LRV Project:

(i). Last week the National Council for Planning and Construction, has finally approved the LRV bridge at the city's western entrance designed by Calatrava; all the appeals to court have been rejected; works, however, continued as usual even in the time the matter was discussed at court.

(ii). A memorial statue which was near the central bus station has been removed in the last week of May to a new location to clear the space for excavation works for both the railway central station (of the A1 link), which is to be built at 80m underground, as well as for the LRV surface station.

(B). Tel-Aviv LRV/Metro Project:

Mr. Mofaz visited on 24.05.06 the office of NTA (Tel-Aviv LRV project management), as well as the alignment of the Red Line between Petakh-Tikva and Bat-Yam.

In a statement to the press he said that, despite all rumours, the project had reached the non-reversible point, and he also instructed NTA's Chairman Mr. Benny Waknin and the General Manager Mr. Yishay Dotan to complete within 2 months the design of the Green Line (the 2nd LRV line), as well as selecting the winner for the Red Line; he promised that the first line will be operational in 2012, and that land problems will be solved.

(C). Commercial Developments.

The government intends to build 2 underground commercial areas, similar to those in Toronto and Osaka, one near the Diamond Bourse at Ramat-Gan under the alignment of the Red Line, and the second in Jerusalem at Har Hozvim (a high-tech area); the idea is to create a direct connection between public transport services and business centres free of weather troubles.

73:07.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). THE MISHMAR HA'EMEK MANURE TROLLEY. by Chen Melling.

"I believe Mishmar Haemek, a kibbutz in Jezreel Valley (Esdraelon Valley) never appeared in a direct railway-related context, despite being not so far from the route of the Hejaz Railway's Haifa Branch. Therefore I was quite happy to find a mention of a tiny railway which is said to have existed there.

This popped out while skimming through the pages of a book of memoirs called "Hakibbutz Sheli", meaning in Hebrew "My Kibbutz" and subtitled "Mishmar Haemek 1922-1950". It was written by Yesha'yahu Be'eri and published in 1992. On page 90 of this book, a single sentence mentions the fact that in 1938, a track was installed between the kibbutz's cattle-shed and the adjacent manure heap. According to the book, a trolley ('KRONIT') was used on this track to transport manure from shed to heap, replacing in that function the former wheelbarrow and thus easing the workload.

So far I have not been able to find any other evidence of this operation, not even in another book about this kibbutz which contains an extremely detailed event-list, of which I checked the period 1936-39."

[Ed. adds: Clearly a simple piece of Decauville equipment used for agricultural purposes - something for which the material was designed. But never let it be said that 'Harakevet' does not delve into the deepest and smelliest recesses of industrial rail useage!]

(b). INDONESIAN WAGONS FOR EGYPT IN 1940.

From Marc Stegeman came a reference to a website produced by Gerhard Verhoeven, a former Dutch Colonial railway enthusiast now living in Australia, with his memoirs. From here we take just two items :-

"To assist the allied war effort in the Middle East, some 80 broad gauge (i.e. standard gauge) wagons had been sold to Egypt during 1940. These were seemingly no longer required because of the downturn in sugar exports after the depression of the early thirties. Before the depression, there had been large volumes of sugar exports to British India until it started its own sugar industry." "Then (1939) we sailed on past the island of Socotra, Cape Guardafui, the Strait of Perim, the Red Sea, Suez and the Canal where we occasionally saw the white trains of the Egyptian Railways going past. In Port Said we went to the shop of Simon Artz, which opened in the middle of the night when the ship came in. The early morning was oh, so cold there in our tropical clothing."

(c). MORE ON "S.S. THISTLEGORM".

We have made several past references to this sunken ship, whose cargo included some 8F 2-8-0's and several wagons. (see 23:6:(d), 28:20, 68:6:(h).) In the 'British Legion' magazine, 2/2006, p.8 is an article: "Underwater Action as Divers Replace Stolen Wreck Poppy."

"Eleven service members of diving exercise 'Engineers Down' placed a 'new' plastic Remembrance poppy on the wreck of SS 'Thistlegorm' in the Red Sea on 1 March 2006.

The new poppy was provided by the Legion to replace an earlier Poppy that had been stolen by previous visiting divers.

The SS 'Thistlegorm' was a freighter 126.5m in length and weighed 4,898 tonnes. She was launched in June 1940 and was sunk by a lone German Heinkel-111 bomber in the area of Sha'ab Ali in the Red Sea on 6 October 1941.

The 'Thistlegorm' was an opportunity target, as the Heinkel was searching for the RMS 'Queen Mary'. which was rumoured to be in the vicinity.

'Engineers Down' was an Adventurous Training Exercise (Sub-Aqua) organised by the Royal Air Force Cranwell Sub-Aqua Club, with invited divers from the Royal Air Force Sub-Aqua Federation, plus two others.

The purpose of the exercise was to develop teamwork, leadership and personal qualities through the medium of sub-aqua diving and to conduct diver training and gather sub-aqua diving experience for members of the club.

Team members were: Sqn. Ldr. P. Hamer PJHQ Northwood; Maj. T. Hamnet APA RAF Uxbridge, Flt. Lt. R.

Saldanha, LATCC (Mil) West Drayton; Fg. Off. I. Hannaby, Fg. Off. N. Lane, Fg. Off. H. Reed and Fg. Off. A Woolven, all from RAF Cranwell; Fg. Off. R. May RAF St. Mawgan; Sgt. P. Griffiths RAF Innsworth; Cpl. N. Law RAF Cosford; and Mrs. H. Middleton RAF Scampton."

**(d). Re: 70:13 and 71:09. The Turkish Station at Akko (Acre).
By Paul Cotterell.**

Chen Melling has recently discovered some items of interest about this station, though they do not shed any more light on its actual closure. They come from Preservation and Reconstruction of Acre - Survey and Report 1944 by Percy H. Winter, Senior Architect of the Public Works Department, Government of Palestine by whom it was published. There were schemes at the time for beautifying the town. The following are relevant passages from that Report.

"...It is an unfortunate fact that the Palestine Railways has no architectural staff or retained architect to design its buildings...

[If] when the new [HBT] station is in operation, the General Manager of the Railways would agree that the length of railway from the junction of the new [HBT] military extension with the Hedjaz Railway line, north of the Na'amin river, up to the present [HR] Acre Station, also the present Station itself, would be put out of use and he would not oppose any suggestions for its removal, disposal or adaptation to other purposes. In this event it is recommended:

1. That the redundant stretch of railway line be removed and the raised embankment on which it is laid be leveled down to the general level of the surrounding sand dunes. The primary reason for this is a matter of amenities...It will improve the approaches to Acre and open up the view from the road of the panorama of Acre as seen across the bay.
2. The present Station buildings be reconstructed...They are a blot on the landscape, mar the beauty of the scene...and should be architecturally transformed. The most objectionable features such as the red tiled roof, the chimney pots, the gables and the 'architectural' hobbles and bobbles and 'features' should in any event be removed and flat roofs put over the buildings so long as they are rendered inoffensive and unobtrusive in this important view. The ugly structure near the Station carrying the water tanks...should be demolished as it also is a blot marring the view of Acre from the road".

I have not come across this Percy Winter person before, but he obviously took a violent dislike to the old HR station and his recommendations would have scalped the station building and rendered it void of ornamentation. "Blot on the landscape" indeed! I hate to think what Mr Winter would have imposed upon us had he been allowed his way. It's all academic now, of course, but you can make up your own mind from the accompanying photo taken from that 1944 report. It remains the only one I have seen which shows the whole Turkish station building in its setting. The top half of a water column can be seen in front of the building, the freight platform is visible between the tree trunks at right of centre, the two circular water tanks on their stone base can be made out above the trees further to the right, and the beach is in the foreground.



מחור: "עכו - אחרים מימי החורבים" בעריכת אלכס כרמל וזלמן באווול, בהוצאת המכון ע"ש גוסטיב שומאכר
"Acre Report - Reconstruction of Acre" 1944, 14-2
 אוניברסיטת חיפה, 2000

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. IRAN.

(i). 2005 TOUR REPORT.

(From 'Continental Railway Journal' No. 145, Spring 2006, pp. 553-556.)

"These notes are based principally on observations made during an October 2005 tour organised by Tomas Meyer-Eppler... on behalf of the DGEG. The party was made very welcome in Iran, and afforded every facility to visit and to photograph locomotives, stations, depots and workshops.

Currently, the locomotive stock of the Islamic Iranian Republic Railways (IIRR, or RAI based on the Iranian language title of the administration) is dominated on shunting and light transfer work by General Motors Bo-Bo DE locos of various types and vintages, and on passenger and heavy freight by General Motors class GT26CW Co-Co DE, built mainly in the USA and Canada in 1971-74, although the last batch was built by Hyundai in South Korea in 1984. But times are changing, and major services will gradually be taken over by 100 Alstom Co-Co DE, the majority of which are being built under licence in Iran by Wagon Pars at Arak. But also, on the lines emanating from Arak and Bafq, General Electric Class U30C, built in Canada from 1992 onwards, seem to have the major share of freight workings. There are also other types, which will be mentioned later.... The 'Railway Directory' quotes a total of 557 diesel and 8 electric locomotives in 2003.

TEHRAN. Iran's capital city lies towards the north of the country, about 140km. south of the Caspian Sea. It is the hub of the IIRR system, with virtually all lines in the country radiating from it. Route length of the system in 2003 was 6152 km., of which 94km. were 1,676 gauge (adjoining the Pakistan frontier) and the rest standard gauge. Passenger trains are operated by Raja Passenger Trains Co., which is a subsidiary of IIRR, formed in 1996 to focus on developing passenger services including international trains, upgrading rolling stock and passenger facilities, and purchasing new rolling stock.

TEHRAN STATION. This is an imposing building with free-standing neon light steam locomotive and passenger coach decoration in the forecourt, and impressive murals in the concourse. In nearby sidings were an unidentified Vulcan Foundry, Newton-le-Willows, 2-10-2 (52.11 - 52.74 series, built 1951-3) and a Cowans crane.

TEHRAN CARRIAGE WORKS. This is operated by the Raja Passenger Trains Co. The party were shown the preserved and little-used Royal/Presidential Train, and the refurbishment of the Turbotrains purchased from France about 1975 and out of service for many years. Some redundant units were recently obtained from SNCF to aid this

project, and on the party's last morning in Tehran one of the refurbished units was seen in service. The class 141 railbuses obtained some years ago from Great Britain were also undergoing refurbishment. Many were still in crimson and cream Metro livery, but others were being painted in a pleasant two-tone green and cream livery. It is planned to use these on 'local' services including one to Qom (167km., but given the size of Iran, this must appear local.) Among other items of interest in the surrounding yards was GM Class G12 Bo-Bo 42.091, painted light green with the legend 'HYBRID', as it could also work on battery power. GM Class G8 Bo-Bo 40.414, rebuilt with what looked like a 'crew car' cover around the engine and running plate; and a couple of road buses or coaches converted to run on rail.

TEHRAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS AND SHED. The party were treated to an exhaustive - and exhausting - visit. Seen and photographed were the various classes of GB Bo-Bo - G8, G12 and G22, including some G22's built under licence in Yugoslavia in 1975 - as well as Hitachi locos with the same wheel arrangement. The HT26CW Co-Co's were much in evidence, including one, 62.946, with a strikingly modified front end, not too dissimilar to that seen on 60.306, probably the last representative of the GM Class G16 Co-Co's, built in 1959-62. Henchel 0-6-0DH 30.01, dating from the 1950's was also present. Sought out and photographed was the only Roumanian 'hire' loco seen on the trip, 60.709. This was one of the Craiova-built Co-Co's dating from the 1970's....

TEHRAN URBAN AND SUBURBAN RAILWAY CO. Currently there are two urban lines in operation. Line 1 (Red Line) runs north-south from Mirdamad to Haram-e-Motahar. Line 2 (Blue Line) runs east-west from Dardasht, where the depot is located, to Sadeghieh Square, and crosses Line 1 at Imam Khomeini Square. Both lines are 750V dc third-rail and the first section opened in February 2000, since when there has been steady progress in expending the system. Rolling stock has been obtained from China, the first two series having angular bodies, although some new streamlined units were seen. Stations have been designed to be attractive as well as functional and new works of art have been commissioned for them. Yellow Bo-Bos of Chinese origin are used on Permanent Way work.

Line 5 is an express suburban railway, electrified at 25kV, which runs some 40 km. from Sadeghieh, western terminus of Line 2, through the town of Karaj to Golshahr. It is worked by Chinese-built double-deck stock with a locomotive at each end. The first of these Bo-Bo's is again of rather angular profile, but more recent streamlined units were also noted in operation.

TEHRAN TROLLEYBUS SYSTEM.

Opened in 1991, this is the only trolleybus system in Iran. It consists of five routes, two of which are classed as express routes and run for much of their length on segregated busways. Vehicles seen were articulated, built by Skoda in the early 1990's.

TABRIZ. Overnight journeys were made in both directions between Tehran and Tabriz, which by rail is 736km. north-west of the capital in Azerbaijan province, adjacent to the independent state of the same name. There, G12 and G22 Bo-Bo's were employed on shunting and local freights, with most major workings, including the through portion of the Damascus - Tehran train, covered by GT26CW Co-Co's. However, the prime reason for visiting Tabriz was to see the 25kV-50Hz electric locomotives which worked the electrified line to Jolfa. These are quoted as being similar to SJ Rc4 Bo-Bo's, but are obviously not identical, as the latter are 15kV 16 2/3Hz machines. It had been intended to travel on at least part of the electrified line, but it was said to be out of use and the locos, 40.651-8, were all present on shed. Also found there was one GM Class G8 Bo-Bo DE. Close to the very large and imposing station was a Russian-built 5ft.-gauge 0-6-0T, which shortage of time prevented being identified with certainty. This loco did not appear in the list of 5ft.-gauge locomotives seen at Tabriz in the late 1960's.... But it could have come from the Tabriz - Jolfa line, as this was opened to broad gauge in 1916 and converted in 1958, or from some industrial undertaking connected to it.

MASHHAD. This is Iran's second city, situated in the north-east of the country, close to the borders with Turkmenistan and Afghanistan, and 926 km. from Tehran by rail. Again the DGEG party made an overnight journey from the capital to reach it. Principal interest in Mashhad was the 19km. standard gauge tramway or light railway, which has no less than 10.5km. in tunnel. It is expected to open in 2008, using 99 new trams purchased from China, although there are already some former Düsseldorf trams in store at Mashhad which may be used during the start-up process. At the IIRR loco depot there were the usual Bo-Bo's and Co-Co's in a variety of liveries, but noteworthy among them was a Hyundai-built GT26CW. There was also a Hitachi-built Bo-Bo, together with a couple of angular diesel railcars built at Maribor under licence from Siemens. Some more units may be built in Iran, at Wagon Pars in Arak.

SHAHRUD. An afternoon train, hauled by a GM Co-Co, was used to travel from Mashhad back to Shahrud, which lies about half-way between Mashhad and Tehran. A blue Köf 4wD was seen at a fac-

tory, about half an hour out of Mashhad. The main reason for visiting the small depot and works at Shahrud had been to see the 2M62 twin Co-Co DE locos on hire from the Ukraine, but these had returned home some time earlier. There was just one loco - a G22 Bo-Bo - on shed, but a couple of GT26CW-hauled freights were seen, and there was the first sighting of an Alstom Co-Co DE on a passenger train. The return journey to Tehran was made by road, with a pause en route at Semnan to photograph some more GM Co-Co's on freight trains.

QOM. An afternoon train was caught from Tehran for the 167 km. journey south to Qom. Motive power was a GT26CW, and more of this class of locos were seen en route. At Qom, where the train reversed to continue its journey to Arak, G12 Bo-Bo's were in evidence.

ARAK. The reason for travelling to Arak was to visit the works of Wagon Pars, where a surprise find was the metre gauge 0-6-0T built by Tubize in 1887 for the Rey Railway, just south of Tehran. It had been expected that this loco would be seen in Tehran. Another surprise at the works was one of the former Düsseldorf trams, which was to be refurbished not for use but for preservation. Wagon Pars build and refurbishes wagons and coaches, and there were some former Syrian Railways coaches present for refurbishment. Industrial diesel locos also form part of the Wagon Pars portfolio, and one of these was seen, built under licence for the Mobarakeh Steel Company. But these activities were overshadowed by the construction/refurbishment of Tehran Metro sets with Chinese technical assistance, and the Co-Co DE's and train sets being built under licence from Alstom.

ESFAHAN. From Arak the journey was made by road to the beautiful city of Esfahan, where cultural visits were the main objective. The station is another imposing building on the edge of the city. At the small loco depot, two of the earlier series of GT26CW locos were in residence. A similar loco powered the train used by the party to travel to Yazd.

BAFQ. From Yazd, early-rising members of the party travelled by train to Bafq, 716 km. by rail from Tehran. Others, who went by road, had their first sight of a different class of locomotive - the General Electric U30 Co-Co DE, which had been supplied by Canada from 1992 onwards. These are painted in a pleasant grey and deep pink livery, and one was photographed at work near a quarry, and then hauling its train through the desert landscape. The objective at Bafq was the the locomotive works, where the wall of one building has a large and colourful mural of a U30 class locomotive, and there were many members of this class in various stages of decay around the premises. Also standing forlornly in the hot sun were the ten Co-Co DE's bought new from Roumania in 1986, an updated version of the locos which were later hired from CFR. These were in an orange or blue-grey

livery with yellow lining. An abandoned yellow-painted Bo-Bo defied identification, but was said by the experts in the party to be of French origin. Alstom Co-Co's were also to be found at Bafq, and on the road journey back to Yazd there was the rewarding sight of one of these in a trio of locos hauling a freight across a short viaduct in the desert. Return from Yazd to Tehran was by overnight train, which reached its destination about an hour early."

(ii). THE SHAH'S ROYAL TRAIN.

In 'Bahn-Jahrbuch' 2006 p.81 is a small photo of two of the coaches of the royal train stock in blue and cream livery. "The rakes are kept, almost perfectly intact, in Tehran. Four of the eight coaches date from the beginning phase of the Persian Railways, and were used by Shah Mohammed Resa Pahlawi on 25th. May 1938 for the opening of the first through main line in the country. Four others, including the observation saloon, were delivered in 1959 by Wegmann of Kassel.

With the revolution of 1979 and the return of Ayatollah Khomeini the luxurious coaches were placed under lock and key in a hall at the Tehran repair workshops. They were maintained in good condition by railwaymen, but not made available for visits. With the current situation in the country there is no thought at present of running tourist services."

(iii). NEW YEAR SERVICES.

From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 40 p.21.

Over the Persian New Year holiday period from 15th. March to 4th. April 2006 trains worked for the first time over the new North-South line from Mashhad to Kerman. The train pair, operating once per week, requires 17hours 30 minutes for the journey. To this are added three return trains per week between Mashhad and Yazd, whereby this line has proved its capability of taking passenger services.

The Tehran - Mashhad line was served over this period by 24 trains in each direction, in addition to five longer-distance trains. For a line of over 900km. this counts as a very good service. Normally there are 'only' 12 daily train-pairs over this line.

(iv). NEW STATISTICS. (Also from 'Fahrplancenter News').

Statistics for the Iranian Railways for 2004 have just been made available. They demonstrate some interesting developments

Vehicles.		2003.	2004.	Notes.
Locomotives.	In stock.	560	578	8 Electric.
	In service.	320	335	5 Electric.
Diesel Fuel.	per loco	794,000	770,000	litres per year.
Passenger coaches.	In stock	1,261	1,119	
	In service	1,015	738	
Goods wagons.	In stock	16,435	17,373	
	In service	?	16,328	
Infrastructure				
Lines in use			6405km.	
Stations			367.	
Personnel	Total.	14,305	13,748,	
	of which permanent employees	9,476	8,780.	
Traffic & Operations. (in Millions)				
Passengers.		16,112,000	17,390,000.	
Passenger/Km.		9,314M.	10,012M.	
Freight.	Tons.	28,798,000	29,400,000.	
	Tons/Km..	18,048M.	18,182M.	
Goods in Transit.		1,172,000.	1,418,000.	

In 2004 the international traffic (import and export) amounted to 31,261 wagons despatched, of which 1,234 in traffic with the Aseri province of Nachitsevan (the border at Djulfa); 1,694 wagons crossed the border to Turkey at Razi; 99 wagons were registered at the border to Pakistan at Mirjaweh. 9,921 wagons were used for transport of import and export traffic from the harbours. The rest traversed the border at Sarakhs, which illustrates that traffic with the FSU states and Iran and the Gulf States is gaining major importance.

B. JORDAN. From 'C.R.J.' No. 145 Spring 2006 p. 556.

"For a Railway Touring Company visit in October 2005, steam specials were run as follows: RSH 2-8-2 23, Amman to Qatrana; Nippon Sharyo Pacific 82, Amman to Dera'a; HSiP 2-8-2 17, Amman to Qasir um el Heeran (summit of the southbound climb; it also has other names but that is what appears on the station building: other steam locos seen were Jung 2-8-2 51, operational at Amman but not used on the tour; Nippon Sharyo 4-6-2 85 still under restoration at Amman; RSH 2-8-2 22, HSiP 2-6-2T's 61/63 (the latter with the plates from 61), and HSiP 2-8-2 71, dumped at Amman; Jung 2-8-2 50 or 52 and Nippon Sharyo 4-6-2 81 dumped at Libban (26 km. south of Amman); GE UM10A1A type A1A-A1A DE locos 40210/2/3 were in use at Amman."

C. SYRIA.

(i). HEDJAZ NOTES. Also from 'C.R.J.' No. 145 p.556.

"The following notes are based on the report of the Railway Touring Company tour in October 2005.

STEAM SPECIALS: Hartmann 2-8-0 91 was used on a special from Dera'a towards Bosra, but failed mid-way. Jung 2-6-0T+T performed some shunting in Dera'a yard. Hartmann 2-8-2 260 worked a special from Bosra to Dera'a, and made two trips from Dera'a to Zeizoun in the Yarmuk Gorge on consecutive days, the first being very successful, the second less so. Hartmann 2-8-2 262 worked a special northwards from Dera'a to Izra, where it failed, the tour party being collected by coach. A diesel loco later hauled 91, 260 and 262 to Cadem, where arrival was at 00.30 - with three brave souls still on board! Hartmann 2-8-0 90 worked a special from Hame, where SLM 2-6-0T's 751/754/755 were also still marooned, to Fijeh on the Serghaya line. After a day's attention at Cadem, 262 headed south to near Izra where the party boarded the coaches to travel to Dera'a. For much of the way, the Mikado double-headed with Hartmann 0-4-4-2T 962, with the latter performing solo on one section of the journey.

CADEM WORKS. Steam locos seen were as follows: Borsig 2-8-0 160 was under repair, lifted off its wheels, in the main works building. All others were dumped: Hohenzollern 0-6-0T's 33-34, 35, 37; Jung 2-6-0T 61; Hartmann 2-8-0's 93 and 106, Borsig 2-8-0 163 (identity confirmed by staff); Hartmann 2-8-2 259; SLM 2-6-0T's 752, 753; SLM 0-6-2T's 803, 804, 805; Hartmann 0-4-4-2T 961. Of diesel motive power, Roumanian-built locos A-301 and AV-400 (23rd. August Works, 23438/1977) were both derelict, as was Ganz railcar R-501. Operational were Schöma shunter 2247, running without bodywork, with sister 2246 under repair. Ganz railcars R-10, R-11 and R-502, R-503 and De Dion Bouton railcar ACM3, which performed in the works yard, where its trailer was also present.

DERA'A. Borsig 2-8-0 161, its identity confirmed by staff, was dumped here in grey primer. The southbound international train was observed at Dera'a. It arrived with Roumanian-built diesel AV-402 hauling one coach and an open wagon for baggage. Transfer to the Jordanian train then took place, and it departed composed of two of the GE diesels, two coaches and two baggage vans. Diesel loco AV-401 was also seen at work between Cadem and Dera'a.

POSTSCRIPT. All 1.05m gauge rolling stock, except for the diesels, dates from before 1920 and is in totally run-down condition. There were few passengers, and they seemed to be outnumbered by railwaymen, police and sundry officials by around two to one. The economics of this defy belief, and it is a miracle how the railway survives, especially as the RTC tour was, according to the staff, the only enthusiast trip of 2005." [There is some doubt as to this last statement! Ed.]

(ii). STANDARD GAUGE SCHEMES.

In 'Fern Express' 1/2006 p. 42 is a news item - "The government has an-

nounced the beginning of construction for the standard gauge line from Damascus to Deraa, which will largely follow the historic Hedjaz line. The 110km. long line to the Jordanian border will be built for speeds of 250 km/h and should be the first section of a projected network that will link Syria with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States." One wonders how Egypt is to be reached..... unless some international political changes take place first!

D. HEDJAZ.

Although there is of course much overlap with Jordan and Syria, we have decided to include "Hedjaz" as a separate item for the following report, since it covers as usual several countries.

'HEDJAZ TOUR ORGANISATION.'

The long-running saga of organising Enthusiasts' Tours to the Hedjaz continues. Bill Alborough of Loughborough, a pioneer in this field and one who is officially retired now from 'TEFS' but seems unable to let go (and long may it stay so!) has kindly sent details of a 'Dummy Run' tour he made 11th.-16th. March 2006, to establish details and arrangements for his next, and maybe last tour of the system. Here they are, in his own inimitable style - quoted almost in full, as who knows how this will all sound in another ten years or so? These are the modern equivalent of those Traveller's Tales by Mark Twain and others a century and more ago.

"Saturday 11th. March: Midland Main Line suggest 5 minutes alighting from their (hopefully punctual) arrival at St. Pancras Station until boarding a Piccadilly Line train! In your dreams! I take 18 minutes of frantic activity with hand-baggage only. Do they have an Olympic Sprinter on their (computer-generated) Staff?

Royal Jordanian (RJ) check-in is Air Canada. The Staff fear the RJ 'Dragon Lady'. I have 6kg. hand baggage (5kg. limit). "Please see the RJ Rep" - but she is accepting 12 Huge FRAGILE boxes belonging to a Jordanian Princess having spoken at Women's Day Celebrations hosted by Mrs. Cherie Blair. These are obviously sacrosanct and accepted without query. My bag is weighed FOUR TIMES, then accepted 'subject to crew rejection'. At the aircraft, no-one cares a toss.

The In-flight magazine trumpets new aircraft coming on-line imminently. I hope so. RJ1 12 is an ancient Airbus without in-flight entertainment as TV screens cannot be lowered. My (Ukrainian) Hostess wonders where they found this wreck "as it has not flown in recent weeks". Seats recline at their own volition; toilet doors give a wonderful view to the Princess's lady attendants sitting nearby in Tourist Class as they cannot close. In-flight food is truly excellent, the Cabin Crew delightful, and the wretched crate makes it safely to Amman, landing smoothly too.

Wonder of wonders, I land at 23.30, meet my contact, obtain local currency, buy a Visa and travel 35 km. to the Regency Palace Hotel - to be IN BED at 00.15!!!

Sunday 12th. March: Regency Palace Hotel has glorious, over-heated hotel rooms. I leave windows open. BAD MOVE. 04.15 call to first-prayer, the nearby Mosque is kept for all to know this, including me. I shut the window and sweat,. Breakfast is fine, but the toaster is not; it browns only one side. I report this. Will they have a new one in May? Don't hold your breath. My local contact, colleague and driver take me to the Hedjazi Jordan Railways Station. For the first of many times over the following days, "Mr. Bill" is welcomed as an old friend, much missed. Locos are scattered about the premises. I learn No. 23 cannot go South but will run North, whereas No. 82 is OK to Jiza. Stock is identified for our train, ignoring the newly-painted 'weirdoes'. In the shed and area are Nos. 71 (HSP 2-8-2), 81 (Jung 2-8-2), 82 (Nippon 4-6-2), and 23 (RSH 2-8-2). No. 71 (HSP 2-8-2), 2 x HSP 2-6-2T and 2 x RSH 2-8-2 are displayed around the site. No. 85 is at Aqaba - well, in the desert towards Wadi Rum, having been pushed off the track by the assisting diesel. Ho Hum.

Jordanian Border formalities are swift, but a JD8 Departure Tax must be paid by all-comers for the land-crossing - please note. The Syrians look hopeful for a tip, but I am uncomprehending. "Fy-lz" (phonetic spelling) will be our Guide in May, and has no idea of railways. "Such pollution" he grumbles at Dera'a; Hartmann 2-8-2 No. 260 has arrived on a freight and is being re-fuelled on shed before returning in a (Syrian) half-hour to Damascus - it leaves at 06.30 next day. Hartmann 2-8-0 No. 91 is in steam, receiving minor repairs inside the Depot (also under repair prior to becoming a Museum) and will take a freight to Damascus when needed. No. 66 Jung 2-6-0T+T is in store, while a Borsig 2-8-0 is having a major overhaul. Active steam in scheduled service in March 2006 - cannot be bad. The Station has been completely rebuilt, as has the footbridge. At 16.15, as shadows lengthen, I am taken to the Cham Palace Hotel, Bosra for the night.

Bosra Cham Palace Hotel is hushed - how is business? "This is not yet Peak-Season." As a stupid Tour Operator, I get Room 222 - easy to remember (last night in Amman I had 1717 similarly). There is a wonderful aroma of polish; during check-in with Omar, my shoes become glued to the floor! I order 2 beers from Room Service. Omar (now Barman) brings me a box of 24, to save coming back again. Dinner; as the only Guest in the Hotel, Omar (now Waiter, and Chef too) gives me his undivided attention. Rosé Lebanese wine comes in full bottles; Omar brings what is left to my room, turning off Restaurant and Reception lights as we leave. What time is Breakfast? "It is up to you".

Monday 13th. March: A gentle guided stroll through the ancient City of Bosra is a fascinating start to the day. Syrians drive fast; we're at Cadem Works in Damascus before noon. All the bushes in which 'stored' steam locomotives lurked have been removed; the Transporter is re-painted grey today. Borsig 2-8-0 No. 160 is in the Works for major overhaul. Four wonderful SiFang (China) air-

conditioned carriages (built 07/2005) stand forlornly amid dumped Ganz railcars and old original brown Hedjaz carriages; they demand diesel power. Of the four Romanian-built diesels, one stands on blocks having visited the woods; two await spares (since 1998), and the fourth went to Romania for repair two years ago - no date known for its return. Mallet No. 962 is in the 'active' Yard. Hartmann 2-8-2 No. 262 is split from its tender. Everyone says they really look forward to seeing the Mallet run into the Yarmuk Gorge, but a water gin is essential if it is to return to Dera'a. The line to Beirut Kanawat is torn up beyond the end of the Works, and only the occasional rails set in tarmac at road crossings remain.

"No Photography" signs decorate the road outside the Carlton Hotel. Soldiers with big guns lounge everywhere. "Opposite is the Secret Army HQ" I learn. Room 401 has a wonderful view into that complex... which is maybe why Reception always give me a key to 419 at the rear of the hotel.

Nice rooms, check the Mini-Bar for time-expired cans (mine showed 11/2005). A quality Restaurant where I enjoy the best mushroom omelette I think I've ever had - for US\$ 5. We will now stay here TWO nights, as the Regency Park Hotel in the mountains is definitely NOT Five-Star; Pizza smell dominates in Reception, dark rooms, little English spoken, not a very place at all I find.

The planned all-day excursion for our Group on the full length of the line from Damascus Hedjazi Station to the Lebanese Border at Serghaya is no longer possible. Just 14 km. remain open., for a Fridays-Only train: El Hamé 09.00 to A'in Fidjé 10.00, returning at 16.00. This section rises gently from 760m to 830m only, through woods beside the river, and between the houses. On previous trips I've eagerly awaited the spectacular Barada Gorge (980 - 1100m, 26% gradient!)..... All track is covered by rubbish, scrap cars, subsided hillsides. "The rest of the line will reopen very soon": The new plan : 1894 Swiss-built 2-6-0T No. 755 and three original carriages; depart El Hamé 08.30 to A'in Fidjé 10.00 with photo-runpasts non-stop return to El Hamé; different photo-runpasts on the second ascent. The train waits at A'in Fidjé; coach to Lunch in the mountains, return by the road permitting views of the Barada Gorge. Express to El Hamé, coach to the Hotel, Dinner. I warn the Guide we must walk the 12km. track to select reasonable photo-spots tomorrow. He laughs, disbelievingly - "You are 64 years old, I am 33".

Tuesday 14th. March 2006. The Guide learns I am serious, so buys several litres of water and packets of biscuits for our 12 kms. walk. A sunny day, shaded by trees. "This is a good spot," I am advised. The line is on a curve, the river bumbles on one side and houses on the other, plus mountain backdrop... but where to put the photographers? "Ah" - we later agree six reasonable spots, Three hours later we are in El Hamé, and find ice-cold Carlsberg nearby. Heaven!

Damascus Hedjazi Kanawat Station facade is pristine; 2-6-0T No. 62 remains posed. The interior is a bookshop. Beyond

is a deep crater in which a Supermarket will eventually emerge — currently the money has run out, so there is a hole.... Tracks from beyond the bridge to the fountain roundabout are missing, but in the tarmac at this point can be seen the junction of the lines to Serghaya and Cadem. Gone forever?

Tourism time! The covered souk is clean, tidy and noisy. We visit the World-famous ice-cream parlour for a refresher. Tombs, mosques, coffee shop and hubble-bubble pipes (all smokers are ladies!), narrow streets with touching upper-levels - fascinating old Damascus. Dinner at a traditional restaurant with whirling-dervish dancer rounds off a day of contrasts which I heartily recommend to anyone visiting Damascus.

Wednesday 15th. March. In bright dawn sunshine I am driven towards clouds covering the Anti-Lebanon mountains. Light rain becomes sleet. The Syrian Border Guards look cold; the Lebanese variety are frozen, but still enjoy cigarettes in front of huge NO SMOKING signs. My Lebanese Guide is 30 minutes late, due to heavy snow and fog. Over the Lebanon mountains to a wonderfully sunlit Bekaa Valley from rainy Beirut. Haytham Fawaz is President of the Lebanese Tour Guides Syndicate; a fountain of knowledge about all things Lebanese.... except railways. My Syrian driver is relieved he will not take me to Beirut. Kurban Tours holds the Avis Agency and spares me one of their 1,400 cars. Driver Francois Papas lives adjacent to Beirut Hedjazi Station - lucky!

A short drive to Rayak Repair Workshops. On the only occasion access was allowed, buildings were pristine and dry, and all steam locomotives complete with cab fittings etc., unless already on jacks being overhauled. The Syrian Army occupied the site (refusing entry on every other visit). They're gone. Friendly Lebanese Transport Ministry staff welcome me to the deserted compound. However, the Syrian Army shot-up the tiled roofs, so floors are now covered in broken pieces, with pools of water everywhere. Anything it was possible to remove from the locomotives has been taken away, or melted down and sold locally. Our visitors must take Extreme Care when we visit, as it is now very uneven underfoot. Otherwise, locos stand as positioned previously.

I enjoy a wonderful visit, seeing the German G8 and French-built standard-gauge 0-8-0 locos and three classes of 10.05m Hedjaz-gauge steam power. As snow falls. the final G8 in the yard is not visited - something to look forward to next time! A further 1.05m loco and red/white carriage (another bookshop!) and tank wagon are posed at the Beirut road nearby. The Police block the road across the Lebanon Mountains to Beirut - they say only vehicles with snow-chains can proceed. My Guide knows a back-road round the barrier, and we climb through falling snow and dense cloud at high-speed - if you think the Syrians drive fast.... Happily, no problems occur. The descent into Beirut is sunny, though occasional showers occur during our travels.

"Next Stop Beirut". Oh dear, that old

chestnut, I explain it was NEVER in our Programme. So, we visit Beirut Hedjazi Station, in the trees and beside the old shed lurk five steam locomotives with bullet holes evident. Sides nearest to the old French-style Station have been repainted for a recent film. The original colours on the far side need gardening to be able to get a photograph. The Station clock keeps exact time, on a railway the World has forgotten.

The Junieh Cable-Car is in full swing (awful pun, but it is windy today...) My Guide loves Dunkin' Donuts and I watch as crumbs blow everywhere. With obvious spare time in our Beirut programme, we discuss a re-hash. I must eye-ball his suggestions before agreeing to shuffle the day. Byblos is a treasure: crusader castle, church, charming port with waves breaking over the jetty, small high-class souk, fossilised fish held in quarried limestone - this is obviously a real additional must-see. Nearby in a deep valley is Jeita grotto. Two caverns festooned with illuminated stalagmites and stalactites. One cavern is accessed on an electric boat - an additional delight now in our Tour.

After a series of excellent hotels, the Plaza is a dismal morgue. No need to detail what it lacks: I am negotiating to change it to somewhere better.

Thursday 16th. March. Avis Ali is prompt at 06.20. Endless road tunnels under a rebuilt city to the Airport. RJ is "RESCHEDULED" without more detail. Check-in says, yes, it is now 08.00, not 07.45. Visions of a missed 90-minutes connection in Amman evaporate. A brand-new Airbus, back-of-seat entertainment, cheese roll & cake breakfast, Amman Security cannot read the NO SMOKING signs and a blue fog permeates everywhere. Another ancient Airbus onwards to London, delayed while those who crossed from the West bank when the Border opened at 10.00 arrive after a 90-minutes drive for the 11.00 departure. In-flight films on huge drop-down screens littering the cabin, all very primitive by Thai International standards.

Heathrow only a little late, but is it 2km. to Immigration from the Pier? Piccadilly Line in rush hour is a delight I'd forgotten, Burger King is better than Jolibee, the Filipino chain now covering Jordan. Midland Main Line is its usual efficient self.

Conclusion:-

Visiting Jordan/Syria ahead of this Tour was so worthwhile. Since my 26th. Tour in 1999, many things have changed for the better: more steam in service in Jordan and Syria, an improved Tourism infrastructure overall. SO nice to be recognised by friends from earlier trips, or hear from new faces that "Mr. Bill" was sorely missed. Hilarious stories were told, of our experiences together over the 20-years 1979-1999, and especially faux-pas of later Operators who, having refused experienced railway staff advice, and insisting only their way was right, enjoyed disastrous results. Arabs love to please, but really enjoy it when stupid Westerners come drastically unstuck by their own hand. Sadly, great anger is evident at Dera'a as Railway Touring Company's website claims "In 2000

our party was the first group to travel (beyond Mezerib to Zeizoun) for over 40 years! Rick Tourret's book (the bible for the area) and Nick Lera's videos and old TEFS reports evidence this is a lie. Many of us have pointed this out to the Company; As of 18/03/2006: they still claim this untruth."

Locomotive History Notes.

In response to the question raised in 72:08 C (iii), Bill has also kindly sent us an overview of some post-war history. "Jordan was approached by the Americans, offering a grant to enable HJR to modernise the loco fleet. There is no doubt they expected in return to benefit by orders being placed for American diesels. No British money or aid was involved.

Imagine the Americans' horror when HJR went looking for steam locomotives! For the International service, HJR discovered that Thailand did not take all the 4-6-2 Nippon fleet ordered by them in 1953, and that five remained in Nippon stock. These were immediately available, after conversion to HJR 1.05m gauge. Nos. 81-85. Built in 1953, they thus carry 1959 builders' plates.

For freight, the proven RSH 2-8-2 design was an obvious choice, and construction of this type was still on-going for various places - Maynmar (then-Burma) for example. It is the Indian standard design YD, amended only to HJR gauge - Nos. 21 - 23.

Belgian manufacturer Haine St. Pierre was very keen to enter the export market, and saw this as a great opportunity to perhaps gain many orders in the Middle East. Two designs specific to HJR were created, but only HJR bought them, therefore they remain unique to HJR: a 2-8-2 for light freight work (Nos. 71 to 73) and 2-6-2T for suburban passenger trains (Nos. 61 - 63.)

Finally, German builder Jung made HJR an offer they could hardly refuse, again for an HJR-gauge adapted design they had wanted to build for some time Nos. 51 - 53 as such are also believed to be unique (unless someone knows of examples in other countries.)

It was some years before HJR eventually bought a few American GE diesels, and of course the new potash line had American as well as other diesels from construction days.

As for Syria, after French influence declined Syria entered (and is still nominally in) the Soviet bloc. No offer to them from the Americans, therefore, and no new steam types for SJR to buy. As such, HJR released back to the Syrians some old HR types dating back to 1918 as their new steam fleet arrived, they having helped out on services on HJR for some decades."

E. LEBANON.

Also from Bill Alborough; his newsletter includes a sketch map which we shall not reproduce here, but from which we learn:

At Beirut Hedjazi Station here are two roads leading to the derelict loco shed opposite the elegant French-style station building, then the platforms, then some offices. On the track closer to the platforms stand 'A' No. 36 by the shed, 'B' No. 8 towards the point; on the line further from the plat-

form stand 'B' No. 10 near the shed and 'S' No. 303 nearer the point. Beyond the point stands 'A' No. 37. Nearer the station are several carriages.

At Rayak there is a two-road Running Shed, one track standard-gauge and one narrow-gauge.

On the s.g. track in the shed were, from the buffers, 'G8' No. 105, 'G8' No. 109, 'G' No. 27 (French type). Outside near the offices were 'G' No. 34 and 'G8' No. 106, these for or under repair. Inside the Repair Workshops stood 'G8' No. 104, with its tender in another bay on the other side of the central traverser.

On the n.g. track in the shed are, from the buffers, 'S' No. 302, 'S' No. 307, 'A' No. 33, 'B' No. 6, and outside the shed 'A' No. 31. On a parallel track outside the shed stand - from the buffers - 'A' No. 35, 'S' No. 308, 'S' No. 306, 'B' No. 12 and 'A' No. 34. By the offices stands 'B' No. 7. Inside the Repair Workshops are 'S' No. 304, dismantled, an unidentified 'B' class totally dismantled, 'S' No. 301 standing on jacks. In summary: Locomotives here comprise A-Class 31, 33-37; B-Class 6-8, 10, 12 plus one; S-Class 301-304, 306-308.

F. TURKEY. 'C.R.J.' 145 p. 557.

ISTANBUL RAILWAY MUSEUM. "On 23rd. September 2005 a new railway museum opened at Sirkeci station in Istanbul. The museum occupies a space of 140 sq. m. and has 300 small exhibits on display. These include original plans of the station from 1884 to 1894 (it opened in 1890), other plans and photos, silver cutlery from the 'Orient Express', items from railway schools and hospitals, an early Hornby model, the driving cab from EMU 8027, and various locomotive and rolling stock plates. The museum was opened by Mrs. Ruhan Celebi, and prior to the opening a film showing the building of the Sivas - Erzurum railway in 1940 was projected. The museum is open every day except Sundays, Mondays and public holidays, and admission is free."

G. ERITREA. From 'C.R.J.' 145 p.544.

"A group who visited Eritrea in November 2005 found few significant changes from the 2004 situation. Mallet 0-4-40T's 442.54 and 442.59 were used on the line, and 0-4-0T 202.004 performed in the Asmara shed area. Two Italian 1912-built coaches, painted green, with grey roofs, were in use, and considered a great visual improvement on the coaching stock liveries previously employed. The only detrimental change is that at Massawa the track leading into the old town and port area has been blocked for about the last 200 yards, thus making it impossible to photograph the departing train from the roof of the hotel with the old town and ships in the background.

One of the two small Drewry 0-6-0 diesels (DC 2075/1936) has been rehabilitated with an 'Ural' engine from a former Russian military lorry. It was briefly demonstrated running up and down Asmara yard, sporting on the back of its cab a large number 97 and a metal star. According to

the General Manager, Mr. Amanuwel Gebreselasie, this revival is linked to plans to restart the commuter service at Massawa, which ran (using one or more of the Drewrys) during the 1990's. The semi-derelict remains of the second Drewry 0-6-0 (DC 2079/1937) survived behind the diesel shed at Asmara, and the frames and cab of the 0-4-0D (DC 2083/1937) were balanced on a flat-bed trolley in the station yard. All three Drewrys started their working lives in 1937 with the Sudan Public Works Department, on a 60cm. gauge temporary line used to clear a large sand dune at Tokar. At the time of the Allied invasion of Eritrea in 1941, they were regauged to 95 cm. at the Atbara Works of Sudan Railways and despatched to Eritrea. As the Drewrys were originally fitted with Gardner engines (6L2 of 74bhp in the 0-6-0's and 4L2 of 50bhp in the 0-4-0) they are quoted as Gardners in some Eritrean locomotive lists.

Also present at Asmara were small inspection saloon No. 2, and the body of 'Littorina' railcar No. 7 jacked up at the back of the shed. Nearby was Krupp Bo-Bo DH 25D, whilst another Krupp, 27D, was near the front of the shed. Both carried Krupp plates attached to the right-hand sides of the cab, 25D with works number 3601 and 27D with 3602, both of 1957. Out on the line, 'Littorina' No. 2 operated between Asmara and Nefasit, and two rail-mounted conversions of Russian lorries, using Fiat running gear were seen - one in a station loop at Otumlo and the other at Nefasit.

Earlier in the year, 202.004 had been taken to an exhibition site in Asmara near the Intercontinental Hotel, to be a mobile exhibit in an 'Expo' during part of 2005. The loco, with two open-sided four-wheel coaches ran up and down a piece of track about 1 km. long. Visitors on 3rd. November found it still there, and it performed a few runs in somewhat depressing surroundings. The site was not much more than waste ground with a few trees, a concrete road and some abandoned and seriously-damaged aircraft lying about, and said to be old crash-landed planes brought from the airport!"

H. QATAR.

From 'Lok Magazin' 05/2206 p.16:

ThyssenKrupp AG and Quipco have formed a joint venture in order to make a feasibility study for a 'Transrapid' magnetic monorail line for the 60km. between the Qatar Airport and Manama. The Chairman of ThyssenKrupp, Olaf Berlin, has announced that he expects this study to be finished by the end of 2006 but that it is as yet too early to discuss whether the line will be built.

I. IRAQ.

(i). **OLD NEWS.** In "Rail Power" - journal of the Rail Industry Association of Great Britain - 1981, No. 40, p.12 is an article on 'Trackwork for Iraq':-

"A new design of switch and crossing developed by Thos. W. Ward (Railway Engineers) to compete in overseas markets with continental equipment has proved an immediate success with an initial contract from Iraq Republic Railways worth GBP 5

Million. The new design is called the thick web versatile. Unlike Continental switch and crossing designs, which are based on the conversion of a customer's existing stock rail sections to UIC standard, the Ward design provides thick web switches which match existing stock rails. This enables the customer railway to introduce advanced switch designs without having to change its choice of main line rail section. There are also significant technical advantages with the new design. Thick web section rails promise more strength and stability in the switch rail and also make it easier to clamp the foot of the stock rail on both sides throughout the length. In addition, asymmetric switch-rail sections require less machining to achieve the required point section which both reduces machining costs and eliminates unnecessary weakening of the rail section.

The thick web system was designed in close collaboration with the Iraq Railway Authorities and is also being developed elsewhere with British Rail. Other European plus Japanese firms were in competition for the Iraq order, which covers 500 switches plus spares. While the ability to match the customer's existing rails, rather than requiring the user to adapt his rails to the switch system, provided an important advantage for Thos. W. Ward, it still took nine months of negotiations to break into a market which up to now had been dominated by continental trackwork companies. But having achieved the breakthrough, Thos. W. Ward is now confident that with the thick web versatile design other hitherto-closed markets can be opened up to the British trackwork industry." (Thanks to Marc Stegemann).

J. TURKEY / IRAN / PAKISTAN: "TO INDIA IN THIRTY DAYS."

This is the title of an article by Hermann Neidhart in 'Fern Express' 1/2006 pp. 4-12. It is a modern equivalent of earlier accounts of travels to the East. Translation from the German by the Editor.

"First Stage - to Istanbul.

For the two-day journey from München to the Bosphorus the route via Wien, Budapest and Bucharest is the most advantageous, since one can book the whole trip, including couchette places, through the Deutsche Bahn. The relatively short connections can usually be made with no trouble. Departure is from München Hbf. at the end of October on a Saturday afternoon at 15.26; the EC 'Mozart' reaches Wien Westbahnhof punctually, so that one can continue soon after 20.00 with the D347 'Dacia' via Budapest towards Bucharest. The controls at the EU outer border between Hungary and Rumania are indeed at an inconveniently early point in the morning, but unproblematic. Following a transit of the Carpathians the 'Dacia' arrives, only ten minutes late, at Bucharest North.

Punctually at 14.10 the 'Bosphorus Express' leaves the Romanian capital, destination Istanbul. The 1st.-Class Sleeping Car is worth the money, especially when no-one else enters the compartment. The 'Bosphorus Express' in other respects is hardly worthy of

the name and turns out to be a regular stopper of a train. Entering Turkey is not very a pleasant experience; here all the passengers are invited to detrain into the cold darkness, since the Turkish official who has the stamp allowing entry is not in the mood to come through the train to issue these stamps in the passports (since he would then have to leave his warm office.) A good four hours pass before the Express Train is finally ready to continue its journey. It has exactly the same amount of delay on arrival at Istanbul Sirkeci station. It has now been 44 hours since München.

Travel onwards with the 'Trans-Asia Express' in the direction of Tehran is only possible once a week, that is on Wednesdays at 22.55 from Haidarpasha. Since Ramadan is reaching its end at the beginning of November this year, it is advisable to book ahead. Acquaintances in Istanbul arranged the ticket for me, so that all I have to do is collect it from the north of the city. On the return a short visit to the Café Bar at the heavily-nostalgic Pera Palace Hotel is called for, where Agatha Christie ('Murder in the Orient Express') and the Shah of Persia have also been. Twenty taxi-minutes further on, one stands before the doors of the Technical Museum Rahmi M. Koc, which has a small but good Railway section, including such rarities as the 1866-built Saloon of the Sultan Abdulaziz.

Via Ankara to Lake Van.

At last the evening of the journey further into the Orient has come! With the ferry from Eminönü we cross to the Asian side at the station of Haydarpasa. This has been the departure point for the Baghdadbahn for over a hundred years already, since the days of the game played by Sultan Abdul Hamid and Kaiser Wilhelm II. It still stands as a mighty symbol, next to the harbour. Immediately left of the entrance is the International Counter No. 8. In an adjacent wing is a small Station Buffet where one can drink another Efes beer and get a shish kebab to strengthen one for the journey. The 'Trans Asya Ekspresi' for Tatvan stands with its restaurant car, luggage van and six coaches at Platform 6; one may board an hour and a half before departure.

Next morning around 7am the TCDD Express train has an hour's halt in Ankara. Whilst one takes the opportunity to look a little around the station, the mighty diesel loco DE 22021 awaits the continuation of the journey. In the Restaurant Car a fine breakfast is served, but apart from half a dozen tourists (including Hans from Salzburg, as well as two Frenchmen and two Irishmen) and the Turkish personnel, no-one is there. In the afternoon Kayseri comes into view, where one can obtain supplies and provisions from a kiosk. When the man asks in German "Beer in bottles or cans?" one is at first astounded by the amazing similarities in language with distant Anatolia. Four hours later Sivas, the next major city, is reached.

In the following days there are again almost as many cooks and waiters as diners

at the Breakfast. However there are some more uniformed men now present, who are there to guard the train through Kurdistan. The Police Station at Van was attacked only a couple of weeks ago. The police here are equipped with guns and bullet-proof vests. However, they prefer to pass the time playing cards with the waiters. The only incident - a fellow traveller who is filming out of the window has his camera ripped from his hand by a passing branch, and it vanishes for ever - unfortunately this is no call for the Emergency Brake. But one must say that the journey through the valley of the Murat Nehri with its bizarre mountains in this wonderful weather is indeed worthy of filming.

The last station before Lake Van is Mus, and then the train comes at 14.00 to the harbour of Tatvan. In view of the delay of 2 hours already accumulated, the ferry - which takes, apart from about 60 passengers, only the Luggage Van and a couple of cars - sets off a quarter of an hour later. Until sunset there is wonderful weather, that invites one to stay on deck and observe the mountains which surround the lake, some of them decked in snow. Below decks the last beer, still from Kayseri, is drunk - for soon we will reach Iran, where consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden.

Through Kurdistan to Teheran.

The ferry arrives in Van, on the eastern shore of the Lake of the same name after some four and a half hours. Soon thereafter the train from Teheran arrives. On boarding there is some fighting for places, it seems that reservations made earlier don't count any more. In the Restaurant Car there is already Iranian food available at 20.00. In contrast to the earlier train, the cook and waiter now have their hands full. Rice with Chicken - Avian 'flu is not yet a matter of concern - and pita bread, cucumbers and tea are served. Already before midnight the Turkish border at Kapıköy is reached. And once again all passengers, locals as well as foreigners, have to get out, go into the office and get their departure stamp.

Before the border is reached there is some uncertainty amongst the female tourists - all dig into their packs for some long, white cloths and headscarves, since from this point onwards women must wear clothing acceptable to Muslims. As for the men, apart from shorts almost everything is allowed. At the passport control at Razi is learned to general amazement that the photos for the visas for the women are only acceptable if they are wearing a headscarf!! The clocks in Iran are moved ahead by one and a half hours. At a very unpleasant time, that is to say, 5am., the train halts at Tabriz, where some tourists disembark into the empty, dark and taxi-free station.

For the Persian breakfast there is a massive pita bread, almost as big as a carpet tile, sheeps' cheese, jam, butter and tea - following which one is at least very full. The landscape passing before the windows, with its river valley and mountains, gorges and oases is in places spectacularly beautiful. The closer we get to Tehran the darker

and rainer it becomes. Arrival at the modern station is during the evening. A taxi, for which an acceptable fare is bargained for by an Iranian who is travelling with me, brings me to an hotel in the centre. The room on the 7th. floor is large, friendly and peaceful. This is important, for there have now been 500 kilometres and almost a week since München.

A Metropolis of 12 Million Inhabitants.

Teheran on a late morning - on the streets there is chaos. The driving style of the average Iranian is dreadful - in order to get forward as fast as possible they often like to take the other carriageway, until shortly before a frontal collision - normally one gives way. It is not for nothing that the country has the highest rate of traffic fatalities in the world - 72 killed per day!

In north Teheran, the better residential and business district, it is a little more civilised. A staff member of an organisation based there is in contact with the State Railways, RAI, and is able to organise photographic permits. Without such a permit the photographing of strategic objects - under which stations are also classified - is strictly forbidden. Applicants must provide the exact dates of their station visits and railway journeys, especially departure and arrival times. When there is nothing known against the applicant, and the application can be 'facilitated' through someone who is not totally without influence, then it can be OK.

However, in view of the need to provide the railway connection times - something which is not easy to find out - it is necessary to involve a Teheran Travel Agent as well, which is then able to arrange some of the tickets through a different office. Whereas trains to Isfahan travel daily, it is not easy to get from there to Yazd, as a train traverses this line only twice a week (on the way to Bandar Abbas). It is similar with the link from Yazd to Kerman, concerning which information as to the travel times is only obtained after some very determined and stubborn asking! Eventually the personal timetable is at last relatively clear, so that it can be submitted with the photographic permit application - and the permit is issued at almost the last minute. It looks like a Book with Seven Seals, as it is totally in Farsi, the local language. With the Metro one gets from the north of Teheran to the Imam-Khomeini-Square and to the Bazaar - at least a small Persian carpet ought to be acquired, even though it will bring not only joy on the ensuing rail journey.

In the Night Train to Isfahan.

According to the timetable the night train to Isfahan should start at 22.45. Before this, the newly-acquired photographic permit has to be put to its first practical test. The Tehran Main Station is totally overcrowded today, like the Munich Airport on the first day of the summer holidays. First one goes to the Chief of the Railway Police, who inspects the document carefully and after a quarter of an hour gives his O.K. Now one may take photos, both in the giant wait-

ing hall and on the empty platforms. Access to these is, however, allowed only shortly before train departure, and by this time all the passengers are squashed together by the access gate. Today hundreds of pilgrims are waiting to go to Meshed. At each carriage door a controller stands, who has to channel the masses. Those who have what is termed a 'Private Couch' are fortunate - they have sole access to an eight-seat compartment, and have as many tickets. Pure luxury, but on further sections of the journey it will become more spartan.

The last hours before Isfahan allow for a free view over the dusty desert which surrounds the oasis town. After arrival in the early morning the first step is to take the photo permit to the office of the Station Master, where things go a bit quicker - it would appear that they have already been informed by telephone from Teheran about the impending visit, since my name and address have already been noted. Tea is offered and a little gift is also handed over - a new CD about Raja Passenger Trains. It is even possible to leave my luggage in the Chief's room.

A taxi driver, who speaks good English, not only drives me to Isfahan some 8km. away but also offers a city tour. This is a stroke of luck, for the connecting train to Yazd departs already by late afternoon. (The next one will be in four days!) So one has to visit this enormously beautiful, green place with its extensive culture and history within only half a day. But Ali knows what to do and drives fast to the main sights of the former capital. A half hour before departure the taxi hurtles back to the distant station, where my travelling bag has in the meantime been moved to a different room and a leather armchair stands available for use until departure time - which will be delayed as the loco is 'being serviced'. At around 16.00 everyone runs simultaneously for their coach. Only those in wheelchairs, especial guests and a few other privileged persons may take their places beforehand.

Provincial Stations - Yazd - Kerman.

The train's destination is Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf. Yazd is simply a station on this line and should be reached around 20.00. The young fellow passengers set about converting the seats in the compartment into beds - why not? We are in any case all tired. Later on they go repeatedly and get tea for the passengers, and provide some entertainment, although they speak very little English.

The Old City of Yazd belongs to the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites and is a centre for the Zoroastrians. At the station it doesn't seem very lively. Train movements occur only infrequently. To photograph the station the next morning, a police escort is requested, but he makes no problems about any of the views and angles chosen. On the other hand, apart from a few wagons standing around there is nothing especially fascinating to photograph; the station building itself is the standard half-modern box, as can be found in many places. Since no four-wheeled taxi is available for the trip to the

city, a motor cyclist offers to take two passengers - a quite normal means of transport in Iran; not infrequently up to five (!) persons will be transported on two wheels.

The night is short; at 04.30 the alarm rings, soon thereafter the taxi brings me to the station, where the train to Kerman is due to depart at 06.10. The ticket office opens a half hour beforehand. In the half-filled compartment there is then enough space and time to catch up on the missed night's sleep! Outside is pure desert, just flat sand with mountains in the distance, which sometimes come forward to within a few kilometres of the railway. Sand drives its way into the coach and into the compartment, despite the closed windows. A railway official makes tea and sells breakfast pastries.

It is five hours to Kerman. The Chief of Police at the station there looks at the photo permit and again commands a uniformed officer to escort me, in order that nothing wrong might be photographed. Apart from the train that has just arrived there is not a lot happening. The old station was built in a very simple style. The new "Railway Station of Kerman", not yet in use, has a lot more going for it, at least externally. The owner of the Hotel Akhavan is already prepared for the situation in Bam, where two years ago an earthquake flattened a half of the city including its Citadel.

At the Information counter at the old station of Kerman there is no-one - at 7am. - who speaks English - and a loudspeaker announcement is made for anyone who can help with translation. One is found, who explains that there are no tickets available for purchase here, but only in the train to Bam itself. Exactly when that should depart, no-one seems to know - some time after 07.30. By about 9 there are some 50 potential passengers gathered in the cold waiting hall, and then the doors to the platform are opened.

The Earthquake-Proof Station of Bam.

The train conductor sells no tickets as such, but does take 10,000 Rials, which is about one Euro (for 220 kims.) In the circumstances one is quite prepared to manage without a receipt. The desert landscape with its isolated stations, with nothing around, mountain ranges with often snow-covered peaks, and occasional oases and settlements, is uniquely attractive. In the compartment there sits opposite me a student of architecture, Ali Reza from Bam, who can speak a little English and offers his services as guide.

Shortly after midday today's destination is reached, or at least the station of Bam which, once again, lies well outside the city itself. It is built so solidly that it will with certainty survive the next earthquake. Together with Ali Reza we search out the Station Police, who makes a tour round the building. The train from Kerman goes round a turning circle and is ready for the return journey. For there is no way onward - the railway line on to Zahedan is not yet complete. Some of the earthworks have been completed, and completion in 2006 is still expected.

The taxi driver wants absolutely and only to drive to the Azadi Hotel, there is no other. There is indeed another, albeit only a rather provisional one - the Akhabar Guest House. It has certainly seen better days, nevertheless the outer walls still stand. Ali Reza accompanies me to the Arg-e Bam, the heavily-damaged castle which stands above the totally-flattened Old City. It is already depressing enough, to see what was once one of the most important sights of the many cultural sites in Iran lying in rubble.

Getting on further from Bam is not simple. Next morning one learns at last that there are buses that sometimes stop at a filling station outside the town on the way to Zahedan and might take passengers - so, there is nothing for it but to go and find out. A Volvo bus still has some space for us.

From Bam to Zahedan is the only section, in fact relatively short, where the tracks are still missing between Europe and India. Here there are also a variety of uniformed Police and Military controls that need to be passed, for we are in Baluchistan, in the area where Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan meet, an area notorious since the Middle Ages as the most violent part of Central Asia, where attacks, weapon- and drug-smuggling are the order of the day.

Zahedan: A Bottleneck on the Way.

The taxi driver in the picturesque, broad Baluchi clothing takes us as requested from the bus station in Zahedan to the Hotel Kavir - not an especially welcoming place, but near to the station. Zahedan is the main 'eye of the needle' through which all rail travellers on their way to India here must pass. For it is from here that - now every two weeks - a Pakistani train goes to Quetta, 700km. away, and even this fails to run a good half-dozen times a year. Whoever manages to catch it, however, and survives the journey parallel to the Afghanistan border, will then find India within easy reach.

First we must inspect the station area - the layout appears far too big for the very few train movements. Before even this, however, we have to show our photographic permit to the very strongly-manned guard post at the entrance and convince them of its validity. The Asst. Station Master assures us that there will probably be several free places in the train, however, tickets can only be purchased shortly before departure, and in any case only as far as the border station at Mirjaveh. For these roughly 100km. it is necessary to pay 1200 Rials, much less than a Dollar. For this, though, no comfort is to be expected. There is no First Class or Couchette - and also not for the further 600km. and the total of between 30 and 40-hour journey on to Quetta.

Zahedan has about 600,000 inhabitants, but, apart from the small Archaeological Museum, no cultural institutions to offer. The welcome at this museum is therefore even more warm and welcoming. One is immediately brought to meet the Director, who is also the Director of the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Institute, and his assistant Ahmad takes great care of the visitor from Germany, with extensive tour of the Museum

and a presentation of its archaeological treasures.

In the Hotel that night there is an unpleasant encounter with the Police who raid the hotel very late and want to force their way into the rooms of several tourists. When they don't succeed they withdraw, but not before taking their passports from Reception. Only after lengthy negotiations over several hours, and especially with the help of Ahmad from the Tourism Institute, do we manage by morning to get these given back. After this unhappy affair it is necessary to retreat from the Hotel and accept hospitality with Ahmad and his family, who are very hospitable to the guest from the West.

13 Hours Delay.

On 17th. November at 08.30 the train from Zahedan should depart in the direction of Pakistan. Since it had not arrived by the evening before, however, this scheduled departure time is clearly irrelevant. At the station one is told that its arrival is expected some time during the morning, and that, due to a local festival at the border crossing it could not be despatched punctually. Only as the evening is drawing in can a distant horn be heard. A freight train rolls in, onto which a couple of passenger coaches have been coupled. It spends the next two hours shunting around the station, until it stands facing in the correct direction.

The passengers - five (!) people have now gathered; a Pakistani trader with his wife and a lot of luggage and goods for sale, also Heiner and Michael from Germany, who arrived today. At around 20.00 it is possible to board the train, but it looks pretty awful. The seats and benches of the coaches are covered with a thick layer of sand and dust and the floor full of litter and filth. The station master lends us brushes, buckets and rags, and after some hefty wiping and lots

of water the coach interior gradually acquires a more habitable aspect. It is, however, very spartan. The doors and windows only close poorly, and it is very draughty. However, at last the engine driver sounds the horn to make us get in, and at 21.30, with a 13-hour delay, 24 goods wagons and four passenger coaches depart the Zahedan station behind a diesel loco of Pakistan Railways (PR). These are grounds for a celebration, but unfortunately there is no beer available in Iran, so hostile to alcohol.....

Stonethrowers and Policemen who Shoot Back.

Despite the heavy delay the train rattles along at a maximum of 40 km/h towards Mirjaveh. Suddenly - there is a loud noise in the next compartment. A stone the size of a fist has been thrown through the window, between the horizontal metal bars. Someone could have been severely injured! Concern spreads amongst the passengers. The Pakistani trader says that such things have happened before; so long as no-one has been hit, one can be fairly calm. From the Pakistani part of Pakistan there are constant reports of attacks on trains and lorries, the last such incidents were not long ago. Since the train comes to a stop for a lengthy period around midnight somewhere before Mirjaveh, for security the door locks are checked once again and the lights in the compartments switched off, so that one cannot be seen so easily from outside.

The night is brutally cold, and one is not prepared for this. Any available clothing - rain jacket, caps etc. - are donned, but morning just will not come. With the first rays of sunlight the train sets off once again and rattles towards the Iranian station. This does not however open until 9am and an hour is required for Passport and Customs checks.

73:09.

RAILWAYS OF ADEN.

With thanks to Brian Baxter for sending some copies from old issues of the 'Railway Magazine'.

1. Original Article. "Indian Outpost in Arabia". By Robert Mumford. 'Railway Magazine' February 1976 pp. 73 - 75.

"Few people are aware of the fact that Aden, a one-time dependency of Bombay, British Colony and Protectorate, in the south-west corner of Southern Arabia, possessed a 29-mile long metre-gauge railway which operated between 1916 and 1929.

The idea of constructing a railway to serve Aden Colony and the hinterland of the West Aden Protectorate was originally considered in 1905, but it was not until 1916 that it became a reality, first as far as Sheikh 'Othman, a town near the border with the West Aden Protectorate, and initially it was used for supplying the British forces fighting against the Turks, who had penetrated to within a few miles of Sheikh 'Othman. Aden was then part of the Indian Empire and the permanent way and stock were in the main drawn from the Bombay, Baroda & Central India Railway. The Aden Railway was worked by the North Western Railway of India under one of its officers who was designated 'Engineer-in-charge'.

To work the section between Ma'alla (Aden) and Sheikh 'Othman when it was opened in 1916, two 4-4-0 engines were transferred from the Eastern Ben-

The train then at last sets off for Pakistan, to spend the next hours waiting at the station of Taftan. Here the remaining Rials can be exchanged for Rupees, and in addition one can purchase the ticket on to Quetta. The Station Master is currently busy washing his feet and naturally does not wish to be disturbed. Only after this ritual is complete does he sell us a ticket for 525 Rupees (around 10 Euro). In the Bazaar of Taftan a blanket can be purchased, in order not to freeze again in the coming night.

It is hard to believe, but only at 15.00 does the train finally depart the Pakistani border station and heads off into the mountains. Another 20 to 25 passengers have boarded, together with half a dozen armed Policemen. One introduces himself as responsible for the coach with the foreigners. He takes his duties very seriously, both inside the train and outside, where he marches up and down with his colleagues at each stop and secures the coach. It is also necessary to change our watches again to Pakistan time, another hour and a half forwards.

600km. Alongside Afghanistan.

A kilometre post near the track shows us: it is 605km. to Quetta, the capital of the Pakistani province of Baluchistan. The stations look like old forts, and the train often waits for lengthy periods, although nobody gets in or out. Perhaps the engine driver needs a tea break? So it is also in Nok Kundi, the first large place since Taftan, where the station is barely lit and looks rather sinister. Here also the guard makes his rounds with his rifle on his shoulder.

In the morning light the train traverses a mostly desert mountain landscape, occasionally one sees scattered small villages or isolated huts and houses which have been built where it appears there is an oasis. There is another pause of some hours in the station of Ahmed Wal. Children and youths come to the tracks, at first shy and curious, then so brave that they try out their school English. Afghanistan is only 20km. away, right behind the mountains, but they have never been there. The Police get them to stand in neat rows for a photograph. The engine driver also comes along and, when asked when the journey will continue, replies "No Problem!" But? When strolling around the loco one cannot overlook the fact that someone is working hard on the roof of the engine with big spanners. The town of Nushki is eventually reached with a replacement loco. This is also urgently required, for the line from now on is curvaceous and has to manage the climb into the mountains.

It is more lively in Shaik Wasil than in other stations. Here also a train in the other direction is standing, and a lot of luggage and materials are transported around. It has already taken more than 40 hours to get here from the departure in Zahedan, but it has never been boring; quite the opposite. Shortly afterwards there are more bangs on the side of the coach, also some near the policeman's seat. He jumps up, brings his gun to firing position and shoots repeatedly out of the open carriage door at the stone-throwers - but doesn't hit any. It won't get boring in the future either....

Quetta: The Provincial Capital.

As evening begins to fall we reach Spezand Junction, the point where the lines to

Quetta and the Indus Valley branch off. There is another loco change. A mighty Diesel engine is coupled on at the front, which should be able to manage the steep climb with 30 vehicles to the provincial capital, some 1,800m. high. By the time it roars off darkness has fallen, and we get to Quetta at 19.00. On leaving, it is acceptable to offer the policeman some baksheesh, which he gratefully accepts."

(The account continues with the journey on to Delhi, but this is less relevant to 'Harakevet').

To this exciting report must be added:-
From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 40 p.24.

"QUETTA - ZAHEDAN LINE TROUBLES.

The international line from Quetta (Pakistan) to Zahedan in Iran was closed or suspended at the end of 2005. This followed two attacks on the line within a few weeks. It is unclear which group is responsible for these attacks, but it is not Al-Qaida, more groups from Beluchistan who are becoming more and more conspicuous through their actions. At the same time there were attacks on the Chaman - Quetta - Rohri and Sibi - Khost lines. As a result the Quetta - Chaman line was suspended for 2 months, also - according to newspaper reports - because of very slow repair works."

J. DUBAI. From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 40 p.27:

"On 21.03.2006 construction works began on the first 52km.-long Metro line from Rashidiya to Jebel Ali. It is due to open in 2009. At the end of this year work should begin on the second line, which will be 18km. long from the Free Trade Zone of the Airport to the Medical Centre."

gal Railway (Nos. 561 and 563) and three of the same type from the Bombay, Baroda & Central India Railway (Nos. 228, 349 and 727) as well as a number of first and second-class composite bogie and third-class four-wheel carriages with sunshades from the BBCIR. A Simplex rail motor coach with Dorman four-cylinder petrol engine built for the South Indian Railway was also put into service, making six trips daily to Sheikh 'Othman with seating for 70 passengers.

In 1922, after the railway had been extended to Lahej and Al Khudad, a 4-6-0 locomotive built by Nasmyth, Wilson & Co. Ltd. was sent out to Aden. It was of the India State Railways standard design for metre-gauge. The engine was equipped with the Holden system of oil fuel burning and the main particulars were:- cylinders 16 in. diameter x 22 in. stroke, placed at an inclination of 1 in 16 with Walschaerts valve gear and piston valves. Coupled

wheels 4 ft. dia. and leading bogie wheels 2ft. 4 1/2in. dia. The boiler, which was capable of a working pressure of 160lb. per sq. in., had a heating surface as follows: 90 small tubes of 1 3/4 in. dia. and 12 larger tubes 5 1/4 in. dia., 679sq. ft. Belpaire firebox 108 sq. ft. MLS superheater, surface inside 125 sq. ft., total 912 sq.ft.: grate area was 15 sq. ft. The boiler barrel was 11 ft. 5 1/2 in. long and 3ft. 7 1/2 in. diameter, while the outside firebox measured 8ft. 3 in. long. The combined capacity of the two cylindrical oil tanks on the six-wheel tender was 514 gal. or about 2 1/2 tons., while the water tank carried 2,000 gal. Maximum weight of engine and tender in working order was 61.67 tons of which the coupled wheels of the engine carried 27.9 tons.

In its heyday the railway extended to Al Khudad, a village seven miles north of Lahej, the chief town of the Abdali State, and at one time it was

proposed to extend the railway to the Yemen border some 40 miles away, and there was even a grandiose idea of extending it right up to Mecca, which assumed that the proposal to extend the Damascus - Medina (Hedjaz) Railway would come to fruition. The railway carried passengers in first- and third-class compartments, and was also used for the transport of grass, charcoal, green vegetables, potatoes and skins from the Yemen to Aden via Lahej, and also large quantities of water from the other side of Lahej for the army at Sheikh 'Othman which included a mobile force of cavalry and a camel corps. This was before a number of artesian wells were sunk at Sheikh 'Othman.

Political considerations, both internal and external, delayed the construction of the railway and at one time the Abdali State Emir tried to come to a private arrangement with Indian commercial concerns who were interested.

At the same time as negotiations were proceeding for the Aden Railway

project, the Ottoman Turkish Government, which had extensive interests in the neighbouring Yemen, was negotiating for the construction of a railway from Hodeidah on the Red Sea to Sana with a branch line to Taiz. As a matter of fact, General Izzat Pasha, Chief of the General Staff in Turkey and commander of the Ottoman forces in the Yemen, removed the first sod on March 21 1911, on the site of the railway station just outside the port of Hodeidah, the terminus of the proposed Yemen Railway. It is not clear as to how much of this railway was actually constructed. The Turks also had dreams of a connection with the Hedjaz Railway at Mecca.

When it was decided to extend the Aden Railway beyond Lahej, the civil engineer in charge of the works was a Mr. MacLean who had been in charge of the first section of the railway to Sheikh 'Othman. He was recalled from Mesopotamia (Iraq) and given orders to collect the necessary material and personnel from Bombay and supervise the construction of the extension line.

In a letter dated July 8, 1919, the Government of India Railway Department formally advised the British Resident in Aden that the railway had been extended to Lahej and was open for public transport and that whereas the railway from Aden Town to Sheikh 'Othman was built out of the Indian Railway programme funds, the extension was built for military reasons and at the cost of military funds. The whole railway was however operated by the establishment sent to Aden by the India Railway Board.

The 'Imperial Gazette Atlas of India' for 1928 showed stations at the following places: Al Khudad (terminus), Zaida, Ath Tha Luba (Lahej), Flijah, Danal Amin, Bir Musa Ben (Sheikh 'Othman), Khormaksar and Ma'alla (Aden terminus.) The railway had a total length of 28 3/4 miles. The section from Ma'alla (Inner Harbour, Aden) to Sheikh 'Othman, a distance of seven miles, was opened on January 1, 1916; the section from Sheikh 'Othman to Lahej, 15 1/2 miles, was opened on February 11, 1919; and that from Lahej to Al Khudad, 6 1/4 miles, on January 7, 1920. On May 7, 1920, the Government of India transferred the whole of the Aden State Railway from military control to that of the Railway Board under the control of a Mr. Affleck who was designated 'Engineer-in-Charge'.

The railway is estimated to have cost 37,500 Pounds of which 60 per cent was borne by the Imperial Government War Office and 40 per cent

by the India Railway Board. In the months of April, May and June 1920 the expenditure averaged approx. P 2,000 a month and the traffic receipts P 1,350 a month. In his report to the First Assistant to the British Resident, Aden, in July 1920, Mr. Affleck considered the immediate future expenditure was likely to be P 2,700 a month, and the traffic receipts P 2,000. He stated he could not give an estimate for the more distant future for the following reasons: The railway had not yet been properly equipped with large locomotives and rolling stock, although the matter was being considered by the Railway Board; Public traffic had never had a chance to show its potential, having been started, stopped, and started again whereby the public had lost confidence in the railway and preferred to send their merchandise by camels and carts even though it cost more.

In Mr. Affleck's opinion the public traffic would have to be operated for some time before any worthwhile figures could be produced. In 1910 it had been proposed to construct a 2ft. 6in. gauge steam tramway from Tawahi, a suburb of Aden close to Steamer Point where the ocean liners used to call, to Crater, the old capital, with a branch to Khormaksar and Sheikh 'Othman. In his opinion the railway would pay but it would always be an expensive line to run. He thought that if the Tawahi (Khormaksar -Sheikh 'Othman) - Crater tramway were built, Sheikh 'Othman should develop into a large town and the combined railway and tramway should be a sound commercial proposition. However, this tramway never materialised.

In the early twenties the railway was bedevilled by both labour and sabotage problems, the first being possibly due to the fact that it was administered by mainly Indian personnel, whereas the operational manual tasks were carried out by mainly Adenis, Yemenis and Somalis. Sabotage and pilfering reached such proportions that in August 1920 the Chief Police Commissioner wrote to the First Assistant in the British Resident's HQ that Mr. Affleck had requested a much-increased security staff. At Ma'alla Depot one Inspector or Sub-Inspector, one Hawalder (head constable) and three Constables; and at Sheikh 'Othman Depot one Hawalder and three Constables. Their duties were to be to detect, arrest or prosecute thieves, persons travelling without tickets and vagrants and to travel by train to a certain extent with the object of ensuring that this was achieved; to maintain order at the sta-

tions and to assist staff in dealing with crowds of passengers; to safeguard railway property and staff quarters, particularly at night, and generally to carry out the functions of railway police as laid down in the police manual.

In August 1928 the Political Resident, Aden, advised the Railway Board at Simla that the conclusion had been reached that the railway could not become a paying concern and should be closed down but not immediately, the present service to be reduced by October 1 to one train each way daily between Ma'alla, Lahej and Al Khudad, and maintained till March 31, 1929. About the same time the Colonial office advised the Ministry of Defence that the section from Ma'alla to Khormaksar was of military importance, and should remain; the section from Khormaksar to Sheikh 'Othman had a potential military value only for the protection of water borehole supplies at Sheikh 'Othman; and the section beyond Sheikh 'Othman had no military importance and should be closed as from April 1, 1929, but it would not be dismantled immediately.

At the height of its existence there were two mixed trains a day which left Ma'alla at 07.00 and 14.00, arriving at the terminus beyond Lahej at 09.00 and 16.00. These two trains each returned an hour later. The passenger section of each train was composed usually of eight carriages. The fares were Ma'alla to Sheikh 'Othman, first class eight annas, third class three annas; Sheikh 'Othman to Lahej, first class one rupee four annas, and third class five annas.

From April 1, 1929 the railway's days were numbered and finally in the 'Aden Gazette' of June 29, 1929 an announcement appeared giving one month's notice of closure. Thus ended a railway which, had it proven an economical proposition, could have opened up commercial possibilities in that part of South Arabia especially if it had been extended to Mecca and Medina.

As an anti-climax to the account of this fascinating railway, it is interesting to note that although it was dismantled in 1930, this fact did not prevent the Italians making a broadcast in 1940 that Aden's railways had been destroyed in an air-raid, not realising it had been dismantled ten years before."

Mumford notes that his article was based on files in the India Office Library - specifically R/20; A2A series, files 2/2, 2/3 Pt. 111 2/4 and 2/5; and L/P&S series files 3083/1917 Parts 16,

18 and 26. On p.75 appears a photo of metre-gauge 0-6-0 684 "believed to be of Indian origin" at Ma'alla - intriguingly this loco is not mentioned in the article. There were clearly repetitions and contradictions, so for completeness' sake, and as an illustration of the problems in believing what one reads of ancient systems, here is:-

2. Response.

In 'Railway Magazine' April 1976 p.206 appears a Reader's Letter from Hugh Hughes, then of Croydon. Typically, it points out major discrepancies in a polite manner and adds some very different details.

"May I point out that the reference to 4-4-0 engines being used there is incorrect. Mr. Mumford may well have been misled by an error in an article in the 'Locomotive Magazine' for February 1928.

For working the line, the Bombay, Baroda & Central India Railway supplied in 1915 three of its class 'F1' 0-6-0 locomotives, with 3ft. 7 1/2in. coupled wheels and 14 in. x 20 in. cylinders; they were numbered 288 (built by Neilson & Company in 1879), 349 (Neilson 1880) and 727 (Dübs, 1894). The same railway also provided two first/second composite and four third-class carriages (all these being listed as bogie vehicles), three brake vans, 12 high-sided and 56 low-sided wagons, and one oil tank wagon. In the following year the South Indian Railway railmotor (No. 3 of 1916) was added.

Three similar 0-6-0 locomotives, but emanating from the Eastern Bengal Railway, put in an appearance later on. Two of them, numbered 561 and 563, had been used by the military authorities in East Africa from 1916 onwards; no. 563 (Vulcan Foundry 1900) was transferred direct from Africa to Aden, probably in 1919, but 561 (Neilson 1898) was first of all returned to India and reached Aden in 1920. The third EBR engine was numbered 584 (not 684 as given by Mumford); it was also built by Neilson in 1898 and was transferred to Aden about 1926.

As far as I can trace, none of these 0-6-0 engines worked again after the closure of the railway at the end of July 1929. The 4-6-0 locomotive, however, which was built by Nasmyth, Wilson Company in 1922 and carried the number '1' on the smokebox door as well as on the cab sides, eventually got to India and became Eastern Bengal Railway No. 325 in 1931; moreover it was still running on Bangladesah Railways in 1973 and is probably still active there."



STOP PRESS - ANOTHER MAJOR ACCIDENT.

On Monday 12th. June 2006 at Beit Yehoshua a north-bound Ben Gurion - Haifa express headed by 741 and travelling at 140 km/h hit a vehicle or vehicles on a level crossing. This was after this issue went to press and so fuller reports and analyses will appear in issue 74. Initially it appeared that five passengers had been killed and 80 injured. The loco driver was unhurt and at least one car driver was unhurt, but the loco and first two coaches derailed and tipped to one side and the majority of casualties were in these carriages



The Tel Aviv-Haifa train struck a vehicle on the track shortly after 12 P.M., some 30 minutes after setting off. Three carriages and the locomotive overturned, killing five people and injuring dozens of others. All five of the dead had been trapped inside a derailed car that became wedged between the locomotive and a third, upended car.

Kiryat Bialik resident Moni Moshe Paz, 54, and Acre resident Lilach Suzin, 27, were identified as among the fatalities. Mordechai Shefler, a 68-year-old Kiryat Haim resident, was lightly injured in the crash, but vowed to continue traveling by train. "I was sitting with a friend on the train, with my back to the direction of travel, and we were chatting,"

(from local newspapers via the web.)



73:10 Across the border and in into the sunset.... At "Old Gesher" several former HR wagons have been semi-restored and placed on the remains of the former bridge across the Jordan. The bridge is 246.5 metres below sea level - the rusted kilometre post on the right might be km. 76.3 from Haifa. The rusted telegraph pole takes no further messages across to Jordan - which country forms almost all the landscape visible. On the left is an explanatory table in Hebrew set up by the Kibbutz which operates this historic border crossing site. (Photo: The Editor. Dec. 2005.)