

HaRakevet

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הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
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74:01. New proposed single deck push-pull sets to be built by Siemens

EDITORIAL

It was already obvious some months ago that this was not going to be an "easy" issue, since we would have to begin with fuller reporting on the terrible smash at Beit Yehoshua. But we did not foresee how quickly the latest in Israel's round of defensive wars would start, nor the impact it would have on civilian and commercial life - and on the railways. One of the first missile attacks hit the IC3 depot at Haifa East, tragically killing and maiming members of the maintenance staff who were about their work. But there have been many other effects.

We will report events since the last issue chronologically, so - first the crash, then the conflict, and then the new timetable. But of course there is a constantly changing political situation, sometimes one hears that development work is to be halted, then one hears it is to go ahead after all.... the confusion means that there may be some contradictions both within this issue and between this and the next issue! Still, for the sake of the future historical record, we will try to present what we get. It means that there is a lot of 'News from the Line' this time, and a little less space for historic items. In addition there has been the issue of which illustrations to use, since we do not want to present gruesome and tasteless images of suffering, and yet need to illustrate what has been happening. Maybe the time will come when there is less News and more Peace.

Despite everything - Enjoy!

The Editor.

74:03

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(i). BEIT YEHOShUA LEVEL CROSSING CATASTROPHE

(a). Here is how the 'Jerusalem Post' of 13.06.06 reported the crash:-

"Police investigating if car driver, who caused the accident, was under influence of drugs.

(By Rebecca Anna Stoil and Yoav Appel.)

Rescue services struggled frantically yesterday to save trapped train passengers when a northbound train derailed at Beit Yehoshua, south of Netanya, after it ploughed into a vehicle blocking a crossing.

Five people were killed and 80 injured, some seriously, after the locomotive and two carriages derailed and collapsed atop each other in a twisted pile of wrecked steel. Rescue services worked for hours to extract at least 10 people trapped inside one overturned and mangled carriage, using heavy machine saws and other equipment to cut through the remains, even as other carriages teetered dangerously above them. IAF helicopters landed nearby to evacuate the injured, while the elite airborne unit 669 arrived to assist.

Police chief Moshe Karadi said the accident occurred after two cars collided at the Beit Yehoshua crossing, leaving one of them stranded across the tracks as the barriers came down. Passing motorists rescued the driver of that vehicle, an Isuzu pick-up truck, moments before the collision. Seconds later, the train ploughed into the truck.

The oncoming train travelling from Ben-Gurion Airport to Haifa - an express train that rushed through the area at speeds up to 140 km/h en route to its next stop at

Binyamina - was unable to stop in time. When the train hit the stalled car, it derailed, flipped over, and continued for another few dozen metres northbound, dragging the car with it. The train's momentum carried it over 100 metres past the crossing, where as the carriages derailed, they slammed on top of each other, bringing down nearby trees and leaving a wide swath of debris as they careened down the tracks. Parts of the train's suspension and wheels disconnected from the force of the collision, and lay strewn alongside the track. The engine and the two leading passenger carriages landed in a crumpled heap halfway between the junction and Beit Yehoshua station, with the carriages wedged in the rail bed, situated at the bottom of a steep embankment.

"The train was in an almost completely impossible situation," said Ofer Linchevski, the director-managing director of Israel Railways at a press conference hours after the collision. "The train's driver operated the emergency brake and honked about 300 metres before the crash, but was unable to stop." About 150 passengers were on the train when the accident took place, police said.

Alongside the Magen David Adom rescue service, police and the fire brigade worked together with 669 and the Homefront Command's national search and rescue team to rescue injured. The emergency personnel response was massive, involving over 330 emergency response personnel and 80 volunteers.

One of the passengers, Haim Portnoy, said at first he didn't understand what was happening. "I was travelling in the second carriage, when suddenly we were enveloped in dust," he said. "I held on tight, and fell against the window, and when the carriage stopped moving, it was on its side. I saw some people bleeding, and I helped them to get out through the window." Rescue services arrived within 10 minutes, he

said. "It was completely claustrophobic," said Noam, a paramedic with the airborne 669 unit. "There wasn't enough room to move, we had to take off all our equipment to get inside. The carriage kept moving while we working inside. Some of the injured were conscious. One of them was conscious, but as we tried to get her out her condition deteriorated and she died.

"It was very intense. You're trying to make sure nothing falls on you, nothing crushes you while you're working, on the other hand you're trying to work on the victims who are trapped," Noam said. "I was one of the first at the Park Hotel bombing," he said, referring to a suicide bombing in March 2002 that killed 30 people, "and this was at the same level as that." Most of the people who were trapped were in the first carriage. "There were 10 people trapped inside, including those who died, and along with the fire brigade we began to evacuate them," said Lt. Yehuda from the Home Front Command's evacuation unit. "It was very, very hard, and suffocating, intensive work. We had to prop up the entire carriage with poles, because we were afraid it would fall over. There were three people conscious inside the carriage, and we tried to calm them down; we gave them some water. They were crushed, and we had to find a way to get to them. One by one, we began to pull them out," he said.

As the sun set on Monday night, the rescuers went home, and heavy cranes prepared to lift 300 tons of crumpled metal train carriages off of the tracks, more questions than answers remained as to the causes behind the crash that killed five and injured 77.

According to the initial police investigation, the driver of one of the two trucks involved in the accident is a local veterinarian, and had apparently just been involved in an earlier accident at Poleg, a few kilometers west of the railroad crossing. While initial evidence suggested that one vehicle had been hit from behind while stopped at the closed level-crossing barrier, later evidence indicated that the vehicles may have sideswiped each other, as one swerved out of its lane on the undivided two-lane road.

Linchevski said the train was allowed to travel legally at 140 km/h on that section of track. He confirmed that Israel Railways received an initial report about a car blocking the tracks moments before the crash, but without enough time to alert the train driver. The train driver escaped with minor injuries, he said. Both vehicle drivers involved in the accident were being questioned by police. Police chief Karadi said the incident appeared to have been unintentional, but an investigation had begun to ascertain the exact cause. Police immediately established a district-level investigative team, led by District Traffic Police Commander Dep.-Cmdr. Yigal Hadad. Shortly after the collision, police gathered testimony from the two vehicle drivers and the train conductor. The veterinarian was arrested under suspicion of driving under the influence of narcotics.

Since the horrific train accident almost exactly a year ago at an ungraded

crossing near Kibbutz Revadim that killed seven people and injured 190, Linchevski said, a crossing inspector had been stationed at the site of the Monday's accident, but only during peak hours, and had left his post at 10 a.m. The incident occurred about two hours later, a few minutes past noon. The crossing had been designated as one of 24 dangerous crossing points, he said, and there were plans to build an underpass to replace it.

Late in the evening, police detained one man for suspected complicity in the collision even as Israel Railways defended its right to withhold documents pertaining to the investigation of a similar deadly crash whose first anniversary was to be commemorated Monday. Since the accident at Revadim, difficult questions were also addressed to Israel Railways, the company that runs all of the country's trains. Four months after that incident, a special police taskforce established to probe the crash recommended pressing charges against two Israel Railways officials on charges of causing death by negligence due to their alleged responsibility for the fatal train disaster. The findings were transferred to the State Attorney's Office, which was supposed to decide whether indictments will be filed. But the rail company refused to hand over documents that could have been self-incriminating, and, in fact, the hearing with regard to the documents was slated to have been held on Monday afternoon.

Among other conclusions made following the Revadim crash, NIS 1 Billion was supposed to be budgeted, for building – in cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation – grade separations (bridges or tunnels) at 31 locations where roads cross railway tracks. The Beit Yehoshua crossing was one of those locations.

Similarly, after acknowledging in 2003 the danger of the Revadim crossing, Israel Railways had stationed a worker to direct traffic at that crossing, but he went home at 3:30 p.m. on that fateful Tuesday, two hours before the accident.

In addition, inspectors were looking into claims that while the IR control room was allegedly aware of the truck stopped on the tracks, the conductor failed to answer control-centre warnings over his walkie-talkie until it was too late. Linchevski, who began his job at the company after his predecessor Yossi Mor resigned following two major rail collisions last summer, denied that the train driver could have prevented Monday's crash."

(b). In view of the carnage, it is probably for the best that the loco was leading. The service involved was Train 58 comprising Bo-Bo 741 and push-pull coaches (in order from the loco) 311, 339, 329, 316, 301.

(c). David Direktor, Information Specialist and Library Manager of IMI TAMI Institute for Research & Development Ltd., has noted in the Israel Patents Journal "Application no: 172943, Application date: 2/1/2006, System for detecting obstacles at grade crossings. Compearls Ltd." and suggests this may be of future use.

(d). Aharon Gazit has sent further notes: "Ironically, in a press release of 08.06.2006 from the Transport Ministry it was stated that a Railway Police force will start its work towards the end of 2006; Its main job will be raising the safety level of rail services both on trains and at level crossings, at least as long as grade separations have not yet been carried out. Meanwhile, the watchmen whom the railways have allocated at 24 problematic level crossings have started to show results, and the cases of violent car drivers went down by 50% in April 2006 compared with April 2005.

But the railways are again facing hard times - mostly not their fault. On 13.06.2006, a driver of a pick-up car who crossed the tracks at Beit-Yehoshua (south of Netanya), which is a protected level crossing, collided with a car, and as a result was thrown aside on the track and was stuck there; He managed to evacuate himself and report to the railways about his car from the emergency phone installed there (until that date, the watchmen had to be on shift only at rush hours). As often happens the collision was unavoidable; a single-deck push/pull intercity train consisting of an Alstom Mega (Prima) loco No. 741 and 6 coaches collided at 11.56 a.m. at 115 km/h with the stuck car, which itself penetrated beneath the loco, lifted it, and then caused the first two coaches to be lifted one on each other, hitting the loco, being smashed, and then being thrown on the track in the typical accordion-like position.

This caused the deaths of 6, in addition to 80 wounded, and of course the total loss of the loco and 3 coaches; but the worst was the sight of the dead people, of whom at least half died because they were trapped for 4 hours under the coaches, and although the rescue team was the best available, together with the air force biggest choppers brought at the site, nothing could help them.

As is usual in such cases, the railways were immediately blamed for not taking all the precautions, and there were claims that the driver could stop the train if the communication was better.

It should be mentioned that the General Manager Mr. Linchevsky is so far coping well with cross-fire he faces; particularly after the police found that one train driver was using Heroin (he was immediately suspended), and that last week, due to a sudden collapse of the signalling system, there was a near collision between two trains not far from Haifa; This was due to a mistake by a signalman who was suspended immediately.

The collision brought the creation of an independent Commission of Enquiry, which found that safety procedures were managed insufficiently; It was recommended to check all the drivers independently, i.e. outside the railways, to extend the shifts of the watchmen for the whole day and even into the night, and to accelerate grade separation, as well as to improve warning and communication technologies.

As far as the collision is concerned, the commission did not find anything wrong in the driver's behaviour or in the condition of the equipment.

However, people often tend to forget that the sharp rise in the number of trains, and the 150,000 new cars added on the roads annually, hand in hand with drivers ignoring red flashing lights and a closed level crossing by the barrier arms - during the three weeks which passed since the collision 300 drivers were caught violating the law and there were more than 10 cases of a near collision! - can only lead to even worse cases!

Meanwhile, Transport Minister Mr. Shaul Mofaz has instructed the Ministry and the Railways to accelerate the building of 54 grade separations, to be completed within less than two years.

There is one "light at the end of the tunnel": A survey regarding the confidence of passenger in rail services revealed that 42% still believe in trains as the safest transport mode!

The railways were about to start last week the works of grade separation at the dangerous level crossing of Binyamina; they blocked this vital road, and caused thereby a stormy demonstration of angry local people who managed to stop rail traffic; after negotiations, the railways decided that first of all an existing underground pedestrian passage will be enlarged to enable cars to pass too, and only then will the level crossing be blocked and grade separation works will start."

(ii). I.R. AT WAR.

I. MISSILE ATTACK ON HAIFA DEPOT.

(i). It is ironic that after so much attention has been paid to a dreadful accident, IR should then be stricken due to the war situation on the northern borders.

On Sunday 12.07.2006 at mid-morning a Katyusha missile struck - apparently randomly - the IC3 maintenance shed at Haifa East depot. These missiles are filled with small ball-bearings which scatter and are designed to cause as much hurt and damage as possible. Eight IR maintenance workers were killed, most of them apparently instantly, by the explosion. 17 were injured. According to a newspaper report, up to 30 workers - Jewish and Arab - had been engaged on repairs to sets on parallel tracks moments earlier.

IC3 Sets 17 and 35 were damaged in the attack.

(ii). On July 17th. the Jerusalem Post published an article - the following is taken from it. By Mark Weiss and Tovah Lazarof.

"I haven't cried yet," said David Wizel, of the Israel Railways maintenance depot in Haifa that lost eight of its 40 employees when a missile fired by Hizbullah plunged through its metal roof mid-morning on Sunday. The rocket landed on the platform below, wounding at least 17 workers.

It shattered train windows and scattered metal, plastic and the big white lamps that hung from the roof. Minutes earlier, some 30 workers, Jewish and Arab, had been repairing two railway carriages on parallel platforms.

In describing Haifa's first fatal rocket attack, Wizel said he had been standing outside the maintenance depot near the seashore when he heard the explosion. "One

of the workers standing near me said he wasn't feeling well and he lay on the floor," Wizel told The Jerusalem Post. Only then did he realize that the man was wounded.

People came to work that morning as usual, said Wizel, because they believed they would have time to reach the shelters nearby. But it all happened too quickly, he added.

Tony Karem, who lives opposite the maintenance depot, ran to the site when the explosion shattered his family breakfast. He was greeted by death and destruction. He saw five bodies lying in front of him as he ran in the side door. One of the men was still alive but died a few minutes later. Hours later, Wizel said he still hadn't grasped that eight workers he had seen every day were gone. "I spent more time with them than with my family," he said.

Standing surveying the rubble, Haifa Mayor Yona Yahav said that employees below ground were spared, while all those working on the platform were wounded or killed. He held in his hand a small metal pellet that was only a few millimeters wide. The missile was packed with hundreds of these pellets that are similar to those used by suicide bombers. Yahav stressed that he had known difficult days in the past, such as the suicide bombing of the Maxim restaurant in 2003, but this was the first time that war had been declared on the city, he said. "It's a new reality for our city," said Yahav. He was joined in the maintenance depot by a number of politicians including Transportation Minister and former defense minister Shaul Mofaz, who gave a hasty press conference while standing in a pool of blood that still hadn't been cleaned up. Yahav said that in spite of the attack's severity he had faith that his city could withstand this latest threat. Following Sunday's rocket hit, Yahav - upon instructions from the IDF Home Front Command - ordered residents to stay indoors. He also cancelled summer programmes for children, festivals and other cultural events until the rocket threat has passed."

(iii). From "YNET", a Hebrew-language website. "Family of killed railway worker believes government is doing the right thing." By Ruth Eglash

"The family of one of the eight Israel Railways employees killed Sunday in the Hizbullah rocket attack on the Haifa railway maintenance depot said that despite its tragic loss it believes the steps taken by the government over the past few days are the right ones.

In an interview from the Kiryat Yam home of his brother-in-law Asael Damti, Nir Kuner told The Jerusalem Post that Damti had been a proud Zionist, volunteering Thursday for reserve duty at his air force base even though he was not needed. He had headed out to work Sunday morning at the depot despite the risks of falling Katyushas across the northern part of country because he believed the railways were a strategic part of Israel's infrastructure that had to be taken care of in

any situation. "He went to work and never came back," said Kuner. "What makes it even harder is that a good friend of his died with him in the attack. Nissim Elharar introduced Asael to my sister." Kuner said that Damti, who was originally from Karmiel, married his sister Tali two years ago. Last week the couple had celebrated the first birthday of their daughter, Danielle. "Now she is completely destroyed," said Kuner of his sister. "We are all in shock. We are not used to Katyushas falling in this area." Kuner said that the family only heard about Damti's death several hours after the rockets fell on Haifa at 9:10 a.m. He said that a family member had been working at the Haifa Port nearby and had seen the Katyushas hit the Israel Railways depot where Damti and the others killed in the attack had been working.

An eyewitness at the scene said that the workers had been given little warning that the rockets were coming, and despite the proximity of a shelter in the depot, none of the workers managed to take cover in time. The rocket scored a direct hit, killing eight people and wounding 40, four seriously, said an Israel Railways spokeswoman.

Kuner said that by the time Damti's relative had reached the depot, the bodies had been removed and the wounded evacuated to nearby Rambam Hospital. He said that the family then went to the hospital searching for Damti in the hope he was still alive, discovering only later that he had been killed." It is important for us to show that we still support the government of Israel and believe it is taking the right steps to prevent any more Israelis from falling victims to these terrorists," said Kuner, who currently lives in London and returned to Israel on Friday to show support for his family. Rafi Hazan had been married only two and a half months when he was killed in Sunday's attack on the maintenance depot. He had been living with his wife, Vered, in his mother's apartment in Haifa until two weeks ago when the couple moved into their own apartment in Karmiel.

Luvia Feldman, who works in Rambam Hospital's blood bank, found out fairly quickly that her son, David, had been among those killed. After searching for his name among the list of wounded brought to the hospital and trying to reach him on his mobile phone, Feldman concluded that something terrible had happened to her son, who was to have celebrated his 28th birthday in two weeks.

"I did not see his name," she told Ynet. "But he did not answer his phone either so I knew that something bad had happened." David Feldman and his girlfriend, Karmit, had been talking of getting married soon and they had started looking for a suitable venue for the wedding, Ynet reported.

Also killed in the attack were Nissim Elharari, 43, of Kiryat Ata, who leaves his wife, Orly and three children, Noa, Nadav and Dor; Reuven Levy, 46, of Kiryat Haim, who was buried Sunday night and leaves his wife, Tirza, and 14-year-old daughter, Almog;

Shlomo Mansura, 35, of Nahariya; Dennis Lapidos, 24, of Kiryat Yam; and Shmuel Ben-Shimon, 41, of Yokne'am Illit."

THE WAR - GENERAL NOTES.

(iv). There were rumours of a complete railway shutdown but Sybil Ehrlich reports that trains continued running north as far as Hof Carmel, and the real problems were only in the Haifa area itself. On 15.08.2006 IR was offering free travel for any residents of the north returning home after the Cease-Fire had taken effect - from any stations up to Pardess Hannah, on to any station from Athlit and further; On presentation of an ID card showing the address in the northern region they would be provided with a free ticket.

(v). Chen Melling wrote on August 16: "I want to draw your attention to an announcement made today (August 16). The Finance Ministry has instructed Israel Railways to freeze the three main projects in the five-year plan - the 'Development Towns Line' between Ashkelon and Beersheba, The 'Valley Railway' between Haifa and Beit She'an, and the doubling of the line to Nahariya."

Chen goes on to say how disappointing this announcement is, just when these areas are suffering so much from the security situation, that's all they need. Not a word about the Jerusalem line, though.

(vi). WAR FOOTING.

Aharon Gazit writes:- "As was to be expected, the new speed restrictions mentioned in my last report brought many delays to the timetabled trains; This created much anger amongst passengers, who asked repeatedly whether the war in the north were the cause. The Railways answered that, although this was a contributory factor, the main reason for the delays was the speed restrictions."

Due to the war, the main traffic control is being handled from Lod, and trains sometimes terminate at Binyamina and sometimes at Haifa-Hof-Carmel.

It is important to mention that neither the police nor the National Roads Company (formerly Public Works Department), were in favour of the speed restrictions, claiming that it will bring more cars back on the roads, thus increasing again the congestion; Mr. Linchevsky promised to add trains where needed as soon as possible, once the new "war timetable" is issued."

(vii.) THE WAR. A PERSONAL VIEW.

by Paul Cotterell.

16/7/06. It doesn't have a name yet. Well, it's been referred to in Israel as the 'Just Reward', or maybe 'Just Desserts', Campaign. But it's been going on for five days already so I guess we can call it a full-blown war. As my e-mail connection with Walter has been on the blink for months, and as things have been hotting up considerably here in Haifa, it seems worthwhile to keep some sort of hardcopy record of events as they affect IR only. I hope it won't be a lengthy diary.

This morning, just after 09.00 I think it was, and without a warning siren, Haifa came under sustained attack from missiles fired by Hizbullah terrorists from Lebanon. (The whole north of Israel had, of course, been under continuous attack from Katyusha rockets for days, but these were longer-range missiles with more destructive power). One of them hit the diesel depot, landing on the large new building used for maintenance of IC3 sets and carriages. This building stands on the site of what was the old corrugated-iron standard gauge engine shed dating from 1919 and which has appeared in published photos. Some thirty railwaymen were at work in the maintenance building and eight were killed with many others suffering injuries of varying seriousness. In addition to its 90 kilograms of explosive material the missile had also been packed with small steel balls to ensure maximum casualties and injuries. It was found to have been Made in Syria.

(A police officer at the scene later recounted that one of the things which most lingered in his mind long after the event were the mobile phones on the bodies of the dead. The phones never stopped ringing as desperate relatives tried to make contact.)

Trains through Haifa were immediately suspended and, in fact, all services north of Binyamina were cancelled. (Trains north of Akko had already been suspended when Katyushas began falling on Nahariyya as hostilities erupted on Wednesday 12th - at least I think it was the 12th, but it is not easy to keep track of times and dates in wartime with events moving at breakneck speed).

By midday Hizbullah was threatening more missile attacks on Haifa. Wonder if the old British army 'Hillmens Pride' concrete bunker at the Museum might turn out to be of practical use. Sirens shatter my reverie. More incoming. Wait them out and head for home.

17/7/06. Woken up about 06.00 by air raid sirens. Nothing nasty lands so go back to sleep. No trains are running, no work at Museum. Later two salvos of rockets hit Haifa. Then, at 14.50, a missile lands a few hundred metres from Bat Galim station. Apartment building destroyed, 6 injured. Could be a whole lot worse. The Home Front Command orders everyone to stay at home or go to air raid shelters for the duration.

18/7/06. 4 rockets around town - forget to note time. Haifa East loco depot hit again, but few people on site (no trains) so no injuries this time and little damage. Many locos and much passenger stock appear to have been evacuated southwards already.

19/7/06. At 10.20 about six rockets hit Bat Galim. Some land close to IR main line and lower station of the cable car up to Stella Maris. Little damage. No advance siren sounded - glitch with electricity supply? Later found that Bat Galim station security camera had recorded one missile exploding in the track ballast just off the west end of platform 1. Repairs are quick and easy.

22/7/06. Chen phones to say the original Gesher Paz bridge is being demolished. This has been planned for a while. Obviously someone decided this is a good time to do

the job as there is no rail traffic underneath! **23/7/06.** Things seem to be quieting down in Haifa. Relatively few overnight Katyushas anywhere, even along the northern border towns and villages. We're advised that it's okay to go to work if there is suitable shelter available. I'm going stir crazy so take the opportunity to head off to the Museum and catch up on e-mails, water the plants, etc. Not a good move. At 11.00 Haifa is hit with six rockets. Two people killed. Local radio reports the continuing demolition of the old Gesher Paz bridge and queries the necessity of doing this at such a time. Someone in uniform "seriously doubts" the wisdom of carrying out the work while the missile threat has not been eradicated. Evening TV news clip shows passenger trains now extended north to Hof HaCarmel station on southern outskirts of Haifa. At 23.50 a lone freight train heads south through Bat Galim. Wonder what it can be.

25/7/06. Relatively quiet morning is shattered at 12.10 when 16 rockets hit Haifa. Half a dozen land around Bat Galim, near the station and Rambam hospital. A couple explode quite close to Cotterell Towers but both edifice and residents are unharmed, if not entirely unperturbed. In evening I learn from Ofer Bart that the lone freight of a couple of nights ago was a special working from Haifa port. He tells me that not all passenger trains are reaching Hof HaCarmel, some terminating at Atlit and others at Binyamina. Ofer adds that the timetable is something of a shambles, at least in part because a line speed of 105 km/h had been imposed as a result of the Bet Yehoshua wreck which only happened on 12/6 but already feels like ancient history. He also tells me that Control had long ago decamped from Haifa Central to set up shop at Lod station. Sounds like a logical precaution to me.

26/7. One of those infuriating slide bar announcements on TV states that trains are to return to Haifa. They don't say when.

27/7. Morning. Look out window but can see no sign of trains. Take bus to Museum. Spend some hours doing this and that. Once routine chores are now a break from routine. Ah, the ironies of war! Feeling fuzzy and light-headed.

28/7. The local rag 'Haifa News' trumpets that the Carmelit underground cableway has proven itself "a strategic asset". It has been left open outside regular hours for use as a public shelter. Presumably now its continued existence is guaranteed until World Peace comes.

30/7. A freight rattles through Bat Galim and wakes me up at 04.30. I barely have time to drift off again before another one goes through. Thereafter my sleep is undisturbed, except for obsessively repetitive bad dreams. I've had a viral infection of some sort for a few days. Helps explain some above rambling jottings. Feel real rough. Not certain if bugs or antibiotics will win out. Don't much care.

31/7. Southbound freight at 00.15. There may have been a couple of later ones too, but by then I'm practically comatose and have no intention whatsoever of moving a muscle to scribble notes.

1/8. Bedridden. At 22.15 a northbound freight heads through Bat Galim.

2/8. Sometime in the early hours a train (direction unknown) wakes me momentarily. In morning, feeling somewhat recovered, decide to break the monotony and head off to Museum. Arrive 09.30. Surprised to see Yo-Yo 263 shunting port traffic at Haifa East. First time I've seen a thing move here, except the station guard and his mangy dog, for a fortnight. Could this be a sign that normality might be returning? Very soon disillusioned. It had been relatively quiet the last couple of days, with a lull in fighting, but at 10.15 the sirens wail again and distant explosions are heard.

3/8. At 14.00 a northbound train of containers heads through Bat Galim: the first main line train I've seen in daylight since the war began. Well, stone me! - another one follows at 14.15.

4/8. Very early morning freight wakes me. No idea which direction it's going. Newspaper announces that passenger trains are back up to 140 km/h line speed. At 16.00, in good time for the Shabbat, a G12 heads through Bat Galim with the local freight ('Ittuk Kav' - literally Line Switcher) from Binyamina.

6/8. Couple of early freights, southbound presumably, disturb my slumbers. Roll into Haifa East at 09.30 just as Jumbo 603 rolls out with Train 315. This is a full container train made up of about a dozen brand new 72-Shin flat wagons. This must be their first trip as blue protecting nylon is still adhering to bits and pieces of the wagons. More signs of life a couple of hours later: Yo-Yo 261 is batting containers around the port sidings. Other than that, nothing. No sign even of the dog. Later, Haifa catches a heavy salvo of rockets. Two simultaneous explosions are even caught live on prime time. Three people killed in Wadi Nisnas.

7/8. A busy evening! At 22.15 a southbound freight (double-headed yet) goes through Bat Galim, followed by another at 22.40. No sooner has this cleared the station than a double-deck set leaves for Haifa East. This is the first train of passenger stock (empty I presume) that I've seen in three weeks. At 22.50 another southbound freight roars past.

8/8. At 00.05 another double-deck set heads for Haifa East. Then things go quiet again until 22.25 when what looks very much like the 'Ittuk Kav' makes for Binyamina behind a G12. This is followed at 23.05 by a trainload of containers. But enough nocturnal trainspotting for now.

9/8. To Museum. Arrive 09.00. Deserted. Try the station foreman's door. He's on duty, watching TV. Well, there's nothing else for him to do. He tells me that all work in Haifa, such as it is, has been restricted to the hours of darkness. This certainly reflects the pattern of rocket firings which have been in daylight.

14/8. Hardly anything of railway interest for several days: only one southbound nighttime freight noted. But a ceasefire goes into effect today at 08.00 local time. Take the opportunity to head off to the Museum. Everything still there and still in one piece.

15/8. I'm back at work. IR is too. Several freights last night. This morning passenger trains start running through to Nahariyya, the line having been checked and found to be undamaged. No suburban trains around Haifa yet. A Dagon trip working makes for

Haifa Central and there's a Yo-Yo waiting to go into the port. It'll take maybe a day or so to get properly sorted out again but at least some of the bustle is back at last.

It still doesn't have a name. Some are calling it the Second Lebanon War, though there have been official attempts to label it clumsily the Change of Direction Campaign. Neither title is really satisfactory. But then, the war itself was inconclusive and unsatisfactory. This seems inevitable when a regular army fights guerrilla forces ('asymmetrical warfare' I think they call it). In Israel there was almost total consensus about the necessity for going to war, but the way it was conducted is another matter entirely, and its full consequences are not yet apparent. This is no place to discuss such things, but I daresay you'll soon be able to buy The Definitive Book/Video/DVD at your local supermarket.

I am most grateful to all the people who contacted me during the war to enquire after my welfare, and particularly to those folk who were kind enough to offer me shelter from the storm."

(viii). EYE WITNESS REPORT.

From David Duke-Cohan of London, who went on a 'fact finding mission' in August 7th.-9th., the following:- We found that the road from Tel Aviv to Haifa was quiet; with probably no more than a third of the normal traffic. In Haifa there were very few cars travelling although I saw rows of taxis with nobody to take them. Food shops were open but little else. We were shown various areas where rockets had struck and the authorities had immediately filled in the holes and repaired buildings where possible, including the port, post office, law courts, railway sidings and residential homes, in order to demonstrate that life goes on and must be lived as normally as possible. The port itself was completely deserted and there were no vessels docked there. Some of the rockets had landed in the Arab quarter .

We were told that Israeli observation posts marked the position from which the rocket had been fired. The siren then goes and the residents and others have about one minute to get into a shelter. If a rocket lands anywhere near you, then you dive for the ground. A few minutes later everyone is on the phone to Radio Haifa to find out where the rocket had landed. We saw that a fair amount of damage was caused by what looked like little cannons which were in the missile head and which of course flew all over the place upon explosion. The shelters in Haifa had not been used since the 1973 War some of which were unusable; since then the law requires that all newly built residences must have shelters but there were many older buildings where there are none.

We were in our coach when the siren went. As you can imagine, we were out in seconds and stood in a single file against a wall. A short while later we were told that two rockets had landed in the sea.

We had a session with the Mayor of Haifa who said that upon the cessation of hostilities the priority must be the rebuilding of the economy of Haifa and the surround-

ing areas and of course the rest of Northern Israel. Speakers again and again emphasised the necessity of rebuilding the Galilee and Northern Israel.

POLITICS

We were told by one speaker that after 1982 there was a vacuum in South Lebanon and the Shi'ites bought farms, medicines and drugs in the area, as a result of which they controlled the economy and the population became dependent on them. He took the view that Hizbollah wanted to be both a regional and international power and that Iran wanted Lebanon to be a base in the Mediterranean so as to spread their views to South East Europe and Istanbul where more than two and a half million Shi'ites resided."

(iii). VALLEY RAILWAY EXTENSION IN DOUBT.

A report in 'Ma'ariv' of 13/06/06 stated that Jordan has decided against continuation of the new 'Valley Railway' from Beit Shean on to Irbid in Jordan, fearing that use of Haifa Port would adversely affect traffic through Aqaba. If this is so it remains to be seen what effect this decision might have on the rebuilding of the section of line in Israel. However, tenders are still being issued.

Incidentally - how many people know that when Transjordan gained its independence in 1946, there was still for some time a border dispute with Saudi Arabia, which claimed the Ma'an - Aqaba area?

(iv). NEW TIMETABLE.

A new timetable was due to come into force on 02.09.2006. Main development was to be the opening of Kfar Saba Merkaz Station. The timetable is reviewed at length below, but here is Sybil's report from 04.09.2006:-

"Well, it turns out that Kfar Saba Merkaz didn't open Saturday night after all. It seems everyone except me, and the stationmaster and ticket clerk at Beit Shemesh, knew that. I told them both I was going to the new station at Kfar Saba Merkaz and they nodded. The ticket, disappointingly, said Hod Hasharon. (I see that tickets in my collection dated 30.4.2004 call the station H. Hasharon-K"S.)

I changed at Tel Aviv Hagana, and to my immense surprise I saw the new platform (3 & 4) is now open. I was told it opened yesterday (September 3). I thought it would probably open when the new timetable is introduced. Anyway, platforms 3 and 4 are for most southbound trains - Jerusalem from platform 3. I didn't ascertain what "most" excludes.

I arrived at Hod Hasharon, where I got thrown off the train as it was going no further. The station has been officially renamed as of last Thursday (August 31). That's when the signs were changed, according to the friendly stationmaster, who invited this "stations enthusiast" into his office! The platform signs actually say HOD HASHARON STATION. There is no other station the country with the word STATION on its signs. Same with the signs outside the building on the street side. Anyway, there is no date yet for the opening of Kfar Saba

Merkaz, but the stationmaster said he thought it would probably be before the new timetable on October 14, and I should check the IR web site for updates.

From there I took a bus to Jerusalem. Parallel to Road No. 1, just before the 22 km marker, the alignment for the high-speed line is very close to the road (on the right as you go towards Jerusalem). There is a fairly long bridge, on which TRACK HAS BEEN LAID!!!

Other things I saw today: work progressing at Ganei Aviv (not much to see yet), and also at Petah Tikva-Kiryat Aryeh (between Bnei Brak and Segula), with a platform clearly taking shape on the north side of the track. I didn't see whether there was anything on the south side, and I didn't take the train back that way."

(v). FURTHER NOTES - KFAR SABA MERKAZ NOW OPENED AT LAST. Sybil wrote on 10.09.2006:-

According to the IR site, and one assumes they know (!), it opened on Saturday night, September 9. Last night (Saturday) the site said OPENING. Today it said THE STATION IS NOW OPEN. The station (rail side) looks very much like Hod Hasharon, with a paved walkway linking the two platforms at the western end, thus making a "het" shape. On the street side, the building is under a road bridge. The road is not yet completed. However, the lack of traffic meant that I was able to get quite a good picture (when the security guard and policeman were deep in conversation with their backs to me!) The station name boards all say KFAR SABA. Not Merkaz, Sokolov or anything else. However, an explanatory leaflet in the station calls it Kfar Saba Merkaz. Tickets to Kfar Saba are printed Hod Hasharon (same fare). It costs NIS 5 to go from Hod Hasharon to Kfar Saba.

Incidentally, the Beit Shemesh level crossing guard was in his little booth after midnight. Every level crossing on the section from Beit Shemesh to Ramle, including the one near the late Sejed, has a guard. If the crossings are guarded 24 hours a day, that means each crossing needs THREE PEOPLE to guard it. Is that a crazy waste of money or what?

However, the latest horror story (not rail related) is that a car driver called the police (Tiberias area) to report a lunatic driver who was overtaking him on a white line and doing other maniacal things and would the police kindly do something to catch him. The police told him to SEND THEM A FAX. An hour later the maniac driver crashed, killing himself and his four passengers, and injuring several people in the car he crashed into. Big scandal involving traffic police.

(vi). NEW ISRAEL RAILWAYS TIMETABLE, AUTUMN 2006. (By Chen Melling, translated and with comments by Sybil Ehrlich.)

(a). On Saturday evening, September 2, 2006 [since this was written, postponed to October 14 because of damage caused to the Haifa maintenance depot by the rocket attack on July 16 and consequent shortage of rolling stock, lack of mainte-

nance facilities and shortage of personnel] the new IR timetable comes into effect. The original plan was to introduce it at the beginning of the summer, but infrastructure project delays on which the new timetable is dependent led to postponement and even some changes. The security situation, by contrast, has not affected the timetable, and IR management decided to introduce the new timetable on the planned date, even if it means only partial implementation, without the section north of Haifa for fear of rocket attacks. [Fortunately overtaken by events; normal service resumed on August 15 following the cease-fire.]

The factors that made the introduction of the new timetable possible are the completion of the third track on the Ayalon line and the widening of stations along it, the opening of the new station in Kfar Saba Merkaz and doubling of the track between it and Petah Tikva-Segula, and improvement in the condition of passenger rolling stock. In the last two years this has increased by nine IC3 sets acquired second-hand from Sweden, new JT42BW locos up to number 772, and 54 new double-decker coaches from Bombardier that will enter service shortly.

Contrary to the promise by IR management last year, passenger service from Ben-Gurion Airport southwards (via a new chord linking the airport-Modi'in line with the Rosh Ha'ayin-Lod line) didn't start at the beginning of this year and won't be included in the new timetable either, because of infrastructure delay. Even the work that has been completed is running behind schedule, in particular in connection with the new Kfar Saba Merkaz station, which has been almost complete for a year without any track, because of delays by Ma'atz, the Public Works Authority, that was responsible for building the alignment between the new station and the existing Hod Hasharon station. [Kfar Saba Merkaz is in fact scheduled to open on September 2.]

The new timetable is being introduced despite the damage to rolling stock in the last year and a half in three major accidents (Revadim, Ahuzam and Beit Yehoshua), that apart from the human cost also resulted in two JT42BW locos being scrapped (Nos. 739 and 741), IC3 set No. 31 being totally wrecked in the Revadim accident and at least five Spanish push-pull coaches that were severely damaged in the Ahuzam and Beit Yehoshua accidents, at least two of them beyond repair. Despite that, it is not clear how the Transport Ministry's decision to reduce maximum railway speeds on many sections from 140/150 kmh to 120 kmh and less will affect implementation of the timetable. The decision was taken after the new timetable had been prepared, and although it was supposed to be temporary and experimental, it is continuing to have a bad effect even after the announcement of the end of the experimental period.

(b). PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN THE TIMETABLE

The main changes in the new timetable, detailed below, are in the service to Kfar Saba and the service pattern on the coastal line on Fridays. In addition there is a wide vari-

ety of small changes and improvements throughout the system, both from a working aspect and commercial considerations, and also in accordance with passenger demand. The revolutionary change in the Kfar Saba-Jerusalem service means a huge increase in the number of weekday trains from 291 in the old timetable (before the start of fighting in the North) to 336 in the new one. Also on Fridays there is a similar big increase, thanks to the separation of the suburban and the intercity services.

(c). OPENING OF KFAR SABA MERKAZ STATION AND DOUBLING OF THE TRACK TO IT.

The new timetable includes one new station, Kfar Saba Merkaz. This station is close to Sokolow Street in Kfar Saba (and that was its planned name), and like its neighbouring station, now renamed Hod Hasharon, it is between the lanes of Road 531 currently under construction. The new station is linked to Hod Hasharon by only 1.2 km of double track, with a scheduled journey time of less than two minutes.

Doubling of the existing track between Tel Aviv Merkaz and Hod Hasharon has not yet been completed, but the new timetable takes into account the doubled section between Kfar Saba Merkaz and Petah Tikva Segula (including Hod Hasharon and the expanded control centre at Rosh Ha'ayin North). This improvement will allow, among other things, for three trains an hour in each direction on this line at peak times, which will mean a considerable upgrading of the service.

An additional change arising from the increased capacity on the line is the separation of services between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem from the service between Tel Aviv and Kfar Saba, by splitting each existing journey in the previous timetable into two separate journeys – from Jerusalem Malha to Tel Aviv Merkaz and from Kfar Saba Merkaz to Tel Aviv Hahagana. The separation significantly increases the number of trains that can go on the Ayalon line in each hour, and abolishes the dependence between the two sections of service which caused problems of constant delays on the Jerusalem line [notoriously bad – s.e.].

In addition to the train that in the past continued to Jerusalem, and will still run in the new timetable on this section, there will be an additional hourly train at peak times, and throughout the day an hourly train from Kfar Saba to Rishonim.

Travel times on the upgraded service are the same as they were on this section (Hod Hasharon-Tel Aviv Hahagana), with the following exceptions: travel time for trains that continued in the past to Jerusalem will be shortened from 35 to 32 minutes, and in the opposite direction (from Tel Aviv to Kfar Saba) from 34 to 31 minutes; and for trains from Kfar Saba to Rishonim travel time will be extended from 33 to 34 minutes but in the opposite direction will be shortened from 34 to 33 minutes. The trains added in the new timetable are scheduled to take 33 minutes southbound and only 30 minutes northbound.

In planning the new timetable for this service, IR has succeeded in continuing the

trend of past years of keeping to a regular pattern of times, a positive factor in a suburban timetable. At peak times, passengers will not have to wait more than 24 minutes for a train, and usually no more than 20 minutes. Below is the detailed service pattern for weekdays on the Kfar Saba line:

From Kfar Saba Merkaz to Tel Aviv:

- XX:06 between 06:06 and 10:06 and between 10:06 and 21:06 (the former trains to Jerusalem; last one continuing to Beit Shemesh)

- XX:25 between 06:25 and 10:25 and between 15:25 and 19:25

- XX:45 between 06:45 and 20:45 (continuing to Rishonim)

From Tel Aviv Hahagana to Kfar Saba:

- XX:11 between 07:11 and 10:06 and between 16:04 (the only exception to the pattern) and 20:11

- XX:29 between 06:29 and 10:29 and between 15:29 and 18:29 (trains that formerly came from Jerusalem)

- XX:47 between 06:47 and 20:47 (all starting from Rishonim at XX:27)

Thanks to increased capacity on these lines an anomaly in earlier timetables has been corrected. In the morning peak hours trains didn't stop at Bnei Brak and Petah Tikva-Segula in the direction of Kfar Saba between 07:03 and 08:03, even though one of them was a train from Jerusalem. [There was only one train *between* those hours, it passed through without stopping, and it WAS the train from Jerusalem – s.e.] Chen's explanation: I suppose I meant that the large gap in service in Bnei Brak and Segula has now not only been closed, but also "filled" with an extra service on top of that which passed through without stopping. Now the train from Tel Aviv that formerly started in Jerusalem will also stop at these stations, as well as the third train added on this section in peak hours.

(d). CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF SERVICE ON THE COASTAL LINE ON FRIDAYS

The biggest change in the new timetable relates to weekends. IR is continuing the trend it started a few years ago of giving the Friday and Saturday evening timetables a similar flavour to those during the week (between Haifa and Tel Aviv), that is to say a separation between the "intercity" and the "suburban".

In the new timetable, most trains between Haifa and Tel Aviv are fast, that is to say with intermediate stops at Binyamina (all) and Atlit (some) only, and in parallel most of the suburban trains to Rehovot or Ashkelon, with a connection at Binyamina. Three of the fast trains, two southbound and one northbound, have no direct connection with a suburban train even though they do not stop at intermediate stations on the coastal line. Three of the southbound trains and two of the northbound trains stop at all stations on this section, with no parallel suburban trains.

The number of intercity trains on this line is slightly increased, with the addition of two southbound and one northbound, to and from Haifa. The last northbound summer-time train terminates at Kiryat Motzkin instead of Nahariya, and the first morning train

(unlike night trains) from Nahariya is almost 20 minutes later, from XX:23 (continues to Beersheva) and XX:53 instead of XX:06 and XX:36. These changes also lead to changes in the travel times of most of the other trains, except on the Jerusalem line. Some of these changes can be considered negative, such as the later arrival of the first train to Ashkelon – the first train to there, which in the previous timetable arrived at 07:33, has been cancelled, but in compensation, the following train, 6241, whose arrival is only four minutes earlier at 08:12, starts as all-stations from Haifa instead of from Tel Aviv in the previous timetable.

The Saturday evening service undergoes a similar revolution, and includes three suburban services on the coastal line to and from Binyamina, of which two continue to Ashkelon and the other only to Tel Aviv. The two later trains of these connect with fast trains to and from Nahariya. The rest of the trains between Haifa and Tel Aviv are all-stations except for the first, which leaves Haifa Hof Hacarmel for Beersheva with intermediate stops at Tel Aviv (excluding University), Lod and Kiryat Gat only. Shortly before this train the first southbound Saturday suburban train leaves Binyamina, allowing passengers from intermediate stations to change to the direct train and continue to Beersheva and Dimona (by making the first train to Dimona earlier).

The direct southbound train is instead of that in the previous timetable from Haifa Hof Hacarmel to Jerusalem Malha. In the new timetable the only "ordinary" train to Jerusalem on Saturday night is much earlier, and instead of starting at Tel Aviv it starts at Haifa Hof Hacarmel (again, without stopping at other Haifa stations and with no connecting train, as in the previous timetable), and will stop at all stations to Jerusalem.

In contrast to the previous timetable, there is one direct northbound train, the first northbound on Saturday evening, that departs from Tel Aviv for Nahariya. In total five trains to and from Tel Aviv will serve Nahariya in each direction, compared to only three southbound in the previous timetable. Also northbound intercity trains have been added on the coastal line, three stopping trains only as far as Haifa.

As an additional improvement to the Nahariya service, from October 7, 2006 [note new timetable now comes into effect October 14 – s.e.] to February 24, 2007, train 7021 will start from Nahariya instead of Kiryat Motzkin. The dates reflect the time of the ending of Shabbat in winter, which allow for this improvement only for that specific period.

OTHER CHANGES

(e). ADDITIONAL TRAINS TO JERUSALEM

In contrast to the revolution on the line between Tel Aviv and Kfar Saba, there are not many changes in service between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, except the addition of a later last trains. From Tel Aviv to Beit Shemesh, train 631 has been added, which starts at Kfar Saba (21:06) and continues to Beit Shemesh after stopping at Tel Aviv stations (Merkaz 21:35). [From this it sounds like the

last train doesn't stop at Lod or Ramle; according to IR site it does stop at these stations. I haven't tried it personally. – s.e.] In the new timetable this will be the only train that works on these two formerly unified lines, but it started running before the new timetable, at the beginning of July this year as a result of demand by regular passengers on the line.

In the opposite direction as well a last train was added in July, train 556, which leaves Jerusalem Malha at 22:20 but terminates at Lod. The choice of Lod as a final destination is obviously because the maintenance depot is there, but from a commercial point of view it is problematic because by the time it arrives, 23:21, there are no further trains from Lod except for a suburban to Rehovot at exactly the same time. So night passengers from Jerusalem will find themselves without means of continuing by train until the next morning, and will have to go by private car or taxi.

(f). ADDITIONAL TRAINS AND ADDITIONAL STOPS

As well as the new trains already mentioned, the new timetable includes a number of trains whose journeys have been extended at the beginning or end of the route, and others that will make additional intermediate stops. All this is in response to passenger demand and in some cases to fill gaps in the service that couldn't have been filled up till now. The changes detailed below all relate to Sunday-Thursday trains except where otherwise stated.

On the coastal line two new fast trains have been added between Tel Aviv and Haifa. Southbound, train 57 that leaves Kiryat Motzkin at 11:00 serves as a suburban in the Haifa Bay area (Krayot) and also stops at Atlit. The change doesn't increase the number of trains in the Krayot, as train 61, which formerly left Kiryat Motzkin at 12:00 for Ben-Gurion Airport has been cut back and now starts at Haifa Merkaz at 12:18. There is an additional northbound train at midday, train 62 that leaves Ben-Gurion Airport at 12:23 and is fast (with a stop at Atlit) to Haifa.

Kiryat Motzkin station sees a big increase in service thanks to extending the journey of these two trains, one in each direction. Southbound, train 41 in the new timetable starts at Kiryat Motzkin at 07:03 instead of at Lev Hamifratz, but it won't stop at the other suburban stations. Northbound, train 90, that leaves Ben-Gurion Airport at 19:23 and formerly terminated at Lev Hamifratz, will now go to Kiryat Motzkin and also stop at the other Krayot stations. A third additional train serving the station is train 46 (Ben-Gurion Airport 08:23 [Monday-Thursday] to Kiryat Motzkin) that will now go as far as Kiryat Motzkin also on Monday-Thursday, and not only train 1046 that runs only on Sundays. [Chen explains this by saying the different Sunday service has been abolished and the Sunday-Thursday service is now uniform.]

Train 121, that formerly left Tel Aviv Merkaz at 17:08 for Beersheva, has been extended and will now start at 16:12 from Haifa Merkaz, running directly to Tel Aviv. To connect with trains from the north, subur-

ban train 441, leaves Akko at 15:34 instead of 15:40 and gets to Haifa 9 minutes earlier than in the previous timetable. On Thursdays only Haifa will get an additional train thanks to the extension of train 296, that leaves Ashkelon at 20:52 and will now continue to Haifa instead of terminating at Tel Aviv, with intermediate stops at Netanya, Hadera West and Binyamina only.

Suburban trains 223 and 225 to Rehovot will start at Hadera West at 17:35 and 18:35 instead of at Netanya at 17:54 and 18:54 respectively. In the opposite direction trains 222 and 224, which formerly terminated at Netanya, will continue to Hadera West. Departure time from Rehovot is two minutes earlier, at 16:14 and 17:14 respectively, but the official journey time to Netanya is one minute shorter.

(g). LAST JOURNEYS ARE LATER

An additional aspect of the improvements, in response to passenger demand, is the addition of later last trains on some lines. Those on the Beit Shemesh-Jerusalem line have already been mentioned above, and a last train has been added from Nahariya (22:08 instead of 21:08) and from Ben-Gurion Airport (00:53 to Tel Aviv and Haifa Hof Hacarmel), that will actually work as one of the night trains from the airport from the point of view of its stopping pattern. The additional train from Nahariya can be considered as a correction of an anomaly in that a train at a similar time ran in the past but was stopped because of the small number of passengers using it. This time the train is continuing to Tel Aviv and the airport, rather than terminating at Haifa.

(h). ADDITIONAL STOPS AT INTERMEDIATE STATIONS

Intermediate stations that get additional stops on Sunday-Thursday only, apart from those already mentioned, are Yavne, where the 8:14 will now stop, and also train 237 (Binyamina 06:56 to Ashkelon), and Binyamina, where the only Sunday-Thursday train starting from Rehovot will stop, and continue to Haifa, train 228 that leaves at 19:16. In the earlier arrangement, this train stopped anyway at most of the other suburban stations on the coastal line, and as a result of the additional stop it will reach Haifa 3 minutes later.

(i). PADDING OF JOURNEY TIMES

In contrast to earlier timetable changes, there are few additions to planned journey times of trains. These additions, without actual planned service changes, are called "padding" and are intended to reflect the realistic journey times to improve statistics and timekeeping.

In some cases, departure time of trains is brought forward, as with suburban trains 242 and 204 from Ashkelon northbound, to which 2-3 minutes are added to journey time on the section to Rehovot, and consequently they depart earlier, at 06:23 and 06:46 respectively, and train 6033 on Fridays will leave Lev Hamifratz one minute earlier, at 04:49, to reach Ben-Gurion Airport at the same time as on the previous timetable. In other instances arrival times at the destination station are later, as with train 168 (Ben-Gurion Airport 14:00 to Nahariya), whose journey time is extended by a few

minutes but only on the section from Haifa northwards, and train 11:03 Sundays Only (Nahariya 06:33 to Beersheva Merkaz), whose arrival times at the last three stations are changed to reflect overloading that leads to delays.

As stated above, this is a fairly widespread practice whose necessity is obvious. It is especially strange that the relatively small change made in journey times to Dimona, which are increased by two minutes southbound and one minute northbound. Despite the relatively long connection time northbound at Beersheva North (13 minutes), IR has decided not to add the extra time at the expense of this connection time but to make the departure time from Dimona earlier, thus increasing the overall journey time for Dimona residents to the centre of the country. Similarly, southbound as well the connection time is the same while arrival time in Dimona is later.

For the sake of completeness, we should point out that train 196 (Ben-Gurion Airport 22:51 to Kiryat Motzkin) actually leaves three minutes earlier, despite the fact that it is still a stopping train and there is no planned change in the rolling stock for this train, which is loco-hauled. This is a train that only recently (May 2006) was extended to Kiryat Motzkin instead of terminating at Lev Hamifratz.

(j). OVERTAKING OF PARALLEL TRAINS

The new Friday timetable has a relatively unusual service pattern for this country, of parallel trains overtaking on the same route. Train 6161 (Nahariya 05:23 to Beersheva Merkaz) and 6141 (Nahariya 05:53 to Ben-Gurion Airport) will be fast between Haifa and Tel Aviv. Both will get to Haifa a few minutes after the departure of the stopping trains (6241 and 6243 respectively) to the centre, which will stop at all intermediate stations. In both cases the stopping trains will wait 11 minutes at Binyamina, to enable the fast trains to overtake them and arrive in Tel Aviv considerably before them. This arrangement is to hint to passengers that it is preferable to travel on the fast trains, and it is to be hoped that station announcements will reflect this deviation to prevent unpleasant aggravation to passengers.

(k). ROLLING STOCK

As already stated, since the introduction of the previous timetable, there has been a significant increase in the amount of rolling stock on IR thanks to the completion of the order for second-hand IC3 railcars from Sweden and the return of set 21 into service after the Revadim accident and the introduction of additional double-decker coaches and locos, together with the addition of a fifth coach on most of these sets. These changes reflect the gradual changes in the working of rolling stock in the framework of the previous timetable and will enable the withdrawal from service of all the "stainless steel" French coaches (numbers 91-98) and of several other old coaches.

This trend is expected to continue, and will lead to the reduction of old rolling stock. It is planned in the new timetable to use only four loco-hauled sets on Sundays and three sets on weekdays (in contrast to 5

and 6 in the previous timetable) These will continue to work only between Nahariya and Ben-Gurion Airport, with a single appearance at Beersheva on Sundays only.

The Spanish push-pull coaches will continue to appear as four sets on Sundays-Thursdays, despite the reduction in their numbers as a result of the Beit Yehoshua accident, but one of them will work only as a Haifa-Krayot suburban service, and will apparently be a shortened set. [I didn't understand this part at all; here is Chen's explanation but I'm still rather in the dark: IR's GEC-Alsthom coaches number 5 Generator/Driving coaches, therefore they can operate at most as five sets (or rakes), which used to happen on Sundays at least. The lack of regular (or "Saloon") coaches makes this option irrelevant, unless the rake-size is reduced, giving 5 short rakes.]

The push-pull sets will be used less on the Beersheva service on Sundays-Thursdays compared to the previous timetable, but will continue to appear mainly on the Nahariya-airport service. In contrast, they will not run at all at weekends, so all trains on Fridays and Saturday evenings will be accessible to wheelchair passengers.

There is no big change in the use of railcars, except for their complete disappearance on the Kfar Saba service because of the separation of the service to Jerusalem (worked exclusively by railcars). However, the increased number of railcars, and the end of their use on the Kfar Saba line will lead to reinforcement of railcar-worked services by adding sets throughout the week. The new timetable demands the availability of 40 sets on Sundays and 39 on Mondays-Thursdays, compared to 37 on Sun-Thur in the previous timetable. Presumably owing to the damage caused by the rocket attacks to the three sets in the Haifa maintenance depot on July 16 and 18 it will not be possible to maintain this availability until they are repaired.

The new double-decker coaches that have entered service, together with JT42BW locos that will accompany them, means a big increase in the use of these coaches in the new timetable. The plan is to work 26 sets every Sun-Thur, compared to only 21 in the previous timetable. The nature of this service is not significantly changed, and is mainly based on the Kfar Saba line and the suburban service in the centre of the country being worked exclusively by these coaches, in addition to their occasional appearance on the rest of the lines except Beit Shemesh-Jerusalem and Beersheva-Dimona.

NOTE TO READERS – because of the security situation we have not received a copy of the new pocket timetable, so this survey doesn't include a description of it [how the timetable itself is designed, picture on cover, etc. – s.e.]

(vii). BEIT SHEMESH NEWS.

Sybil Ehrlich writes:- Starting probably on 1st. July (I can't find the exact date at the moment) an additional evening train from Tel Aviv to Beit Shemesh has been added, leaving Hod Hasharon-Kfar Saba at 21:07 and terminating at Beit Shemesh at 22:17, and from Jerusalem at 22:20, calling at Beit Shemesh at 22:57 and terminat-

ing at Lod 23.21. (There is no onward connection). The sets presumably travel empty to Lod for stabling and servicing. Other Beit Shemesh news is that the fare from BS to Jerusalem (and in reverse) was increased from NIS 5 to NIS 7 on August 1. There is also now a watchman on duty at the level crossing, even through the night.

In the new timetable trains will no longer run from Kfar Saba through to Jerusalem, but will terminate at Tel Aviv (in both directions). This is intended to reduce delays to Jerusalem - the trains on that line are notorious for late running. Kfar Saba-Hod Hasharon station will be renamed Hod Hasharon.

(viii). DEVELOPMENT AFTER ALL?

On Arutz 7 (an 'illegal' radio station) on 27.08.2006:

"Among the long-term plans for the northern communities are rehabilitation of the municipal health and education systems, the completion of the northern extension of the cross-Israel toll road (Highway 6), a railway extension to Carmiel, and financial and tax incentives for Galilee businesses and residents.

In addition to government funding, monies for the long-term plans are slated to be raised from overseas donors." (thanks to Matt for this.)

(ix). GAZIT'S GAZE.

And Aharon Gazit noted on 10.09.06:-

"Well, more than a month has passed since my last report; the war is over (as for now) and trains services returned to normal; The damage to the Haifa East depot has been carefully repaired, and it will hopefully return to normal activity soon; the situation with the damaged IC3 trains is not yet known but it is a massive issue, and the trains will probably need to be shipped to Denmark for repair.

Meanwhile, on 16.08.2006, the Finance Ministry has announced, that due to the huge costs of the war in Lebanon, the increased budget from \$4.55 billion to \$5.90 billion (achieved after hard work by Mr. Linchevsky), cannot be implemented, and therefore the following projects will be delayed: Beer-Sheva-Ashkelon line - \$340 million; revival of the Hedjaz line- \$227 million; double-tracking the Akko-Nahariya line- \$227 million; the Akko-Carmiel line- \$273 million.

According to the Finance Ministry, \$568 million needed for immediate purchase of rolling stock, \$455 million for safety - mainly grade separations, as well as promoting two new projects, the 4th track on the Ayalon line at Tel-Aviv, and revival of the Eastern line between Kfar-Saba and Hadera-East (discussed for years) to create a freight axis, are of higher priority than the delayed projects.

However, the real reason is the tension between Transport Minister Mofaz (who never succeeded in any job!) and Mr. Linchevsky; Rumours say that he would like one of his own people in the post, while Prime Minister Olmert likes Mr. Linchevsky. Furthermore, Mr. Linchevsky got the job un-

der a contract and not as a political appointment; but as one politician said unofficially: "In to-day's atmosphere when almost every one at the top is being accused of corruption, everything is possible". Let us hope not in this case!"

(x). JERUSALEM STATION STONE-LAYING.

From 'Jerusalem Post' 13/09/2006, by Etgar Lefkovits. "A cornerstone-laying ceremony for Jerusalem's high-speed train station was held on Wednesday near the city's International Convention Centre. The express train service, which will cut travel time between the two cities to a mere 28 minutes and is expected to service more than 6 million passengers a year, will begin operating in 2011. Among the participants at the event included Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz, Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski and the CEO of Israel Railways Ofer Linczewski."

(xi). CAMEL COLLISION.

From the 'Jerusalem Post': - "A train collided with camel on a section of the track between Kiryat Gat and Beersheba on Thursday 21/09/2006. No one was injured and passengers waited for a replacement train while safety checks were carried out on the train involved in the collision. The condition of the camel was unclear."

(This gives a new perspective on 'hump shunting'! Editor.)

(xii). NEW STOCK:

(a). From Evyatar Reiter: 16 new double-deck coaches arrived recently at Ashdod port as follows.

23/02/06: Unloaded from the 'Regine' were 507, 566, 570, 578.

24/02/06: Also unloaded from the 'Regine' were 562, 563, 565, 573.

01/03/06: Unloaded from the 'Jumbo Challenger-Willemstad' were 561, 564, 567, 569, 571, 574, 575, 576.

The coaches were then taken by rail to Ramta at Beersheba for fitting out where necessary.

The following eight new double-deck coaches were delivered in June to Ashdod Port aboard the "Fair-Partner-Willemstad". Nos. 533, 572, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589.

(b). Even before the arrival of these double-deckers IR had drastically reduced its reliance on old loco-hauled coaches. By

the end of February only one set of old coaches was still working a regular daily diagram, with an extra set being needed on Sundays. The redundant sets had been gathered together for storage at Haifa East station. However, the station was now clogged with long lines of old coaches, impeding traffic movements at certain times of the day. Congestion has only been relieved by the expedient of temporarily shunting sets of these coaches to nearby sidings at the marshalling yard/loco depot and at the Golani sidings between East and Central stations. (P.C.)

(c). Locos 771 and 772 arrived on the "Dan Viking" on 20/07/2006 - this was the same boat, observes Evyatar Reiter, that conveyed 769 and 770 to Israel.

(xiii). PHONE INFORMATION SERVICES.

From a press release of 03/09/06 by Israel Railways:

The railways have selected the company Beeper Communication Israel Ltd. as provider of all the information regarding rail services by phone.

Mr. Linchevsky told the press that 7 companies competed on the tender, and explained that the new service is an integral part of improving services for the public.

(xiv). COST OVERRUNS ON RAILWAY PROJECTS.

From <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/573407.html>. 05/08/05

Israel Railways is experiencing major budget overruns in its Tel Aviv light rail, Ben-Gurion 2000, and Jerusalem high-speed train projects, as well as for new lines to Ashkelon, Be'er Sheva via Ofakim, Sderot and Netivot.

Does the blame lie with professionals who may have been less than professional? It's not clear yet. Three Danish researchers found in a 2002 study that when it comes to major public works projects, "Underestimation cannot be explained by error, and is best explained by strategic misrepresentation - that is, Lying."

According to the authors, professors Bent Flyvbjerg and Soren L. Buhl of Aalborg University and Skamris Holm, a planner with the Aalborg Municipality, the "policy implications are clear: Legislators, administrators, investors, media representatives and members of the public who value honest numbers should not trust cost estimates and cost benefit analyses produced by project promoters and their analysts."

The magic phrase is Initial Unexpected Costs. The higher such costs are, the more excessive expenses have to be absorbed.

Few are the professionals who know what will turn up once the first tractor has set out on the project's grounds. Trans-Israel Highway representatives say, for example, only half-jokingly, that whoever planned the road made sure the route would pass through every possible graveyard and archaeological site.

The 2002 article was based on a sample of 258 transportation infrastructure projects worth \$90 billion, representing different project types, geographic regions and historical periods. The study "found with overwhelming statistical significance that the cost estimates used to decide whether such projects should be built are highly and systematically misleading," according to Flyvbjerg.

According to the report, rail projects have the highest rate of cost overruns of all infrastructure, averaging 45 percent gaps between planned and actual investment costs. Bridge and tunnel projects end up over budget by 34 percent on average, while road projects tend to exceed projected costs by just 20 percent on average.

The team has just published a paper in the scholarly journal of the American Planning Association (APA), entitled, "How (In)accurate Are Demand Forecasts in Public Works Projects?" They looked at 183 road and 27 rail projects in 14 countries. The paper "found that rail passenger forecasts were overestimated by 106 percent on average, resulting in an actual ridership of less than half of that predicted. For nine of 10 rail projects, estimates were high, according to the study."

Both papers have drawn fire from professional associations, which critique them as having analytical flaws promoting "pet theories." However, the history of Israeli cost overruns leave the public to draw its own conclusions."

74:04.

TENDERS

(i). Tender No. HN/KB/01/09: Infrastructure works on the Valley Railway (Hedjaz line) section A, between the historical stations of Kfar-Yehoshua and Kfar-Barukh; km 17.575 to km 24.925.

Works include the following structures:

Structure 01- preparatory and dismantling works.

Structure 02- earthworks, development, track bed, and drainage.

Structure 03- infrastructure works for communication.

Structure 04- a railway bridge over an agricultural way at section 990.

Structure 05- a railway bridge over agricultural way 1122.

Structure 06- electricity and earth connection works and preparing infrastructure for lighting.

Structure 07- security rooms.

Structure 08- rebuilding the water reservoir Alonim B.

Structure 09- rebuilding the water reservoir Northern Kfar-Yehoshua B.

Structure 10- a railway bridge over the national water pipe line.

Implementation time: 18 months. Latest bidding date: 03.07.2006.

(ii). Tender No. HN/KB/12/06: Infrastructure works on the Valley Railway (Hedjaz line) section B, tender B-1 between Kfar-Barukh and waste materials recycling factory.

Works include the following structures:

Structure 01- tracks infrastructure works.

Structure 02- Kfar-Barukh railway bridge.

Structure 03- railway bridge over an agricultural way.

Structure 04- culverts, agricultural passages and acoustic walls.
Implementation time: 20 months. Latest bidding date: 10.07.2006.

(iii). Tender No. HN/KB/14/06: Grade Separation (replacing a level crossing) on road No. 651 between the Keysarya industrial zone and Pardess-Hana (near Keysarya-Pardess-Hana railway station).
Works include: design and building the overhead road bridge, earthworks, roadbed, paving and painting, drainage, supporting walls, acoustic walls, environmental rebuilding, handrails, lighting, traffic lights, communication infrastructure, and additional works.
Structure 01- Design and implementation of the overhead road bridge on road No. 651.

Structure 02- roads, supporting walls, and additional works.
Implementation time: 20 months. Latest bidding date: 13.07.2006.

(iv). Tender No. HN/KB/15/06: Grade Separation (replacing a level crossing) at Binyamina South km. 41+495.

Works include: design and implementation of a road bridge over the railway line, earthworks, roadbeds, paving and painting, drainage, supporting walls, environmental rebuilding, steel constructions, lighting, communication infrastructure and additional works.

Structure 01- design and implementation of a road bridge over the railway line.

Structure 02- roads, supporting walls, and additional works.
Implementation time: 12 months. Latest bidding date: 13.07.2006.

(v). Tender No. HN/KB/09/06: Environmental rebuilding-development works, Gardening and Irrigation systems along the Ben-Gurion Airport - Modi'in line (in full tempo building).

Works include: development works, gardening and plantation, irrigation, preparatory and dismantling, gardening maintenance, and additional works. Implementation time: 16 months. Latest bidding date: 13.08.2006.

(vi). Tender No. HN/RC/03/06: Frame agreement for supply of Grease for Rail Lubricators.

The contract is for 12 months with optional extension for up to additional 48 months.
Latest bidding date: 27.06.2006.

(vii). Tender No. RC/RS/04/06: Frame agreement for supply of Hardware (screws, bolts, nuts, etc.) at all railway sites.

The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest bidding date: 27.06.2006.

(viii). Tender No. BN/KB/10/06: Rebuilding of Communication Structure at Haifa East station.

Works include: earthworks, concrete, frames, and carpentry.
Implementation time: 2 months. Latest bidding date: originally was 31.07.2006; but, since the area was then under fire - delayed without new date!

(ix). Tender No. BH/SR/28/06: Systems for Detecting Obstacles on track at Level Crossings- suggestions to be checked.

The system must be able to scan and map visually the level crossing area and to report/warn to the train driver/central control about the detected obstacle.

The railways intend to test the selected suggested systems on-site.
Latest bidding date: 10.08.2006.

(x). Tender No. CA/SR/16/06: Renting Offices for the Railways.

The offices must be in a distance of not more than 1000m. from Tel-Aviv Savidor station and not more than 500m. from Tel-Aviv Hashalom station; office area between 2500 and 3200 sq.m., and must be available for immediate use. The contract is for 5 years with optional extension of up to additional 5 years. Latest bidding date: 24.08.2006.

(xi). Tender No. HN/KB/01/06: International; for Rail Grinding services. For a period of two years, plus an optional extension of up to five further years. Bids by 28.09.2006.

(xii). Tender MS/RC/2006/19 for providing bicycles and light motorcycles rental services at railway stations beginning with Tel-Aviv Savidor station,

used monthly by more than 650,000 passengers; the service will be in principle similar to that of car rental services, and many companies providing such services have shown interest in the tender; Mr. Linchevsky explained that due to the rail network expansion, feeding buses services, particularly in Tel-Aviv are not sufficient, and the 2 wheeled vehicles will improve it significantly; the railways are also planning how to provide space for bicycles on the trains not on the account of seating and standing capacity.

The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 14.09.06.

(xiii). For upgrading the lighting system at Haifa Kishon works - implementation 3 months; latest bidding date: 26.09.06,

(xiv). For Upgrading the station of Nahariya - including infrastructure for a new track; 12 month implementation; latest bidding date: 18.09.06;

(xv). Rebuilding communication building at Haifa East station; 2 months implementation; latest bidding date not yet defined - delayed because of the war.

74.05

LIGHT RAIL NEWS.

A: JERUSALEM.

(i). The date for starting operation of the first line is 15.01.2009. The Alstom Citadis LRV trains will consist of 4-car low floor trains with capacity for 46 seated passengers, with an operation frequency of 4 minutes interval and an annual traffic forecast of 30 Million. The trains, of which the assembly of the first sets has recently started at Alstom, will be painted in grey with the symbol of Jerusalem - the Lion - placed on the front of each train.

The Jerusalem Municipality has recently granted approval for City-Pass to start laying the tracks of the first LRV line; in the first stage, they will be laid at the highest point from Mount Herzl northwards to the city's western entrance, then near the entrance, and finally along Jaffa Street; works will be carried out 24 hours around the clock to minimize damage to the city's quality of life; However, in about 2 weeks from now (10.09.06), the main work of building the LRV bridge at the city entrance (designed by Calatrava) is to begin, and this will cause high noise levels until

the end of December 2006. As a result, people living nearby will be evacuated for some days.

This bridge has also created a serious problem: When completed, at its top, reaching 120m, a red light bulb will be installed to warn helicopters flying over; The problem foreseen is: How to replace the bulb? The solution found is: with a helicopter - probably on this occasion the pilot will not have to be warned! (One thinks of a new joke: How many helicopters does it take to change a light bulb....)

(ii). And a rather cynical article from the 'Jerusalem Post' of 14/09/2006:-

"Warning: Construction Ahead", by Gil Zohar. "On January 5, 2009, Jerusalemites will finally know if the joke is on us. That morning, the city's NIS 3.2-billion light rail project will either begin operating on schedule and on budget or - as cynics fear - Jerusalem will be crippled with a hugely expensive white elephant akin to Boston's infamous Big Dig. For readers unfamiliar with the New England city, in 1985 the Massachusetts metropolis undertook to excavate a \$2.5-billion tunnel beneath the historic downtown, replacing an elevated expressway while updating infrastructure and creating new parkland. Earlier this sum-

mer, after more than \$12 billion in cost overruns, Boston's long-delayed mega-project was temporarily shut down when a tunnel ceiling panel collapsed, crushing a car and its driver.

Jerusalem's many long-suffering commuters may not face a similar debacle, but fume they'll be made freiers (suckers) by feckless transportation bureaucrats. As many have noted, the terminal at Israel's international airport, known as 'Ben-Gurion 2000', finally opened in 2004.

They cite the countless revisions to the ambitious initial phase of the Red Line, which is now set to snake through the city for 13.8 km. beginning at Pisgat Ze'ev in the north, following Highway 1 south to Kikar Tzahal, where it will turn west along pedestrian-only Jaffa Road, curve south over a landmark bridge by the Central Bus Station and then carry along Herzl Boulevard to Yad Vashem. Tellingly, they worry, the Light Rail Transit (LRT) offices are hidden away behind locked doors in the Clal Center - a concrete carbuncle which is arguably the ugliest, least user-friendly office tower in all of Israel. Mass transit officials have done a less than stellar job promoting public understanding of the many traffic interruptions now plaguing Jerusalem, and the LRT Web site has not updated its English page in two years.

Hold your horses - or should one say sleek tram carriages - says Shmuel Tsabari, project manager for the LRT, who says he can practically guarantee his baby will be delivered on target, if not earlier, and won't cost a grush more than allocated.

Tsabari's reasoning and the ultimate put-down to know-it-alls? The LRT, with its 46 state-of-the-art streetcars, is largely being built abroad by specialized foreign companies which are bound by stiff penalties for any contract violations or delays - and don't share the Levantine mentality of shuwaya, shuwaya (little by little). Known as BOT (build, operate and transfer), the plan is that by transferring responsibility to overseas engineering firms, the privatized LRT will be able to avoid the snafus of government involvement. Under the funding formula, NIS 1.2 billion is coming directly from taxpayers while NIS 2.2-billion is being raised by City Pass, a consortium of French, Italian and Israeli companies that in 1995 received a 30-year concession to build and operate the light rail system. The contract includes a buy-back option after seven years.

In a futuristic fantasia worthy of Jules Verne or Theodor Herzl - who in his 1902 epochal work 'Alneuland' ('Old-New Country') envisioned a European-style tram network spanning rebuilt Jerusalem - there will be 24 stations with trains manufactured in La Rochelle, France, quietly gliding by every four minutes.

Emblematic of the whole complex enterprise and perhaps its most controversial element will be the Bridge of Strings, a 340-meter-long single column suspension bridge designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava that promises to become an icon of the Israeli capital akin to San

Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge.

Calatrava's slender curved span will soar above the perpetual traffic jam at the intersection of Jaffa Road and Shazar and Herzl boulevards, rising from near the future train station - which is slated to begin carrying passengers to Modi'in, Ben-Gurion Airport and Tel Aviv in 2009. Tsabari dismisses criticism of the Calatrava Bridge as an extravagant waste conceived by former mayor Ehud Olmert. While a conventional overpass would cost between NIS 60-80 million, in contrast to the NIS 220 million for Calatrava's modernist masterpiece, a more plebian bridge would entail some eight support piers that would result in a concrete warren worthy of the Clal Center.

Instead, Calatrava's elegant solution will float on two bases now under construction at the project's east and west ends. "This is a bridge but also a monument," beams Tsabari, after showing an impressive computer animation. Comparing Calatrava's design to a harp or shofar, he notes it will be illuminated at night as a landmark of exquisite beauty. Tourists and Jerusalemites will come to promenade along its pedestrian path separated from the tramway, he insists.

And what of opposition from Jerusalem's citizens concerned the ultra-modern design will clash with the historic city's character? Parisians initially hated the Eiffel Tower when it was erected for the 1889 World's Fair. Guy de Maupassant, Emile Zola and Alexandre Dumas the Younger were among those who protested its construction. How does one go about erecting a 2,600-ton bridge? The bridge's anchor bases will comprise 70 holes drilled to a depth of 25 meters, each with a radius of between 60 and 90 cm., Tsabari explains.

Such is the public's misunderstanding of the project - or the LRT's failure to provide information updates - that few people in Jerusalem realize that this drilling job is now almost complete. Beginning in December, City Pass will begin constructing a series of temporary pillars to support the bridge platform. Those 24 metal sheets, currently under fabrication in Padua, Italy, will be transported at night from the Haifa port. Each section weighs 40 tons, and Tsabari notes police may have to close sections of the highway from Sha'ar Hagai to facilitate the huge, slow-moving transports. In January 2007, the mastiff, also being made in Italy, will arrive in three sections of approximately 40 meters each.

"We won't close the expressway entirely," promises Tsabari. With the 118-meter high pylon in place, work will then begin on laying the 68 cables that will support the unique suspension bridge. Averaging four to six "strings" per night, Tsabari anticipates somewhat vaguely that this phase will be finished by next summer.

"I'm not arbitrarily saying summer. This is a very complex thing," he says. For safety reasons, traffic will not be permitted under the bridge at night during this phase of construction. Cars and buses will have

to detour via Givat Shaul or Lifta to reach the city center, he says.

Residents of nearby apartment buildings may also be temporarily evacuated during this phase, explains LRT spokesman Shmulik Elgrably. There may be electricity interruptions or difficulty in reaching their homes, he adds.

The LRT has appointed Amnon Elian as head of the community team coordinating arrangements as necessitated by developments. "Building the LRT isn't virtual," says Elgrably. "You don't do it on the Internet." With the bridge's 68 cables in place, the temporary ramps and pillars will then be removed, the track bed laid and traffic restored. "There's no question there will be a disturbance to the general public," Tsabari asserts matter-of-factly. "It's like doing a house renovation."

B. TEL AVIV:

From a press release of 23.08.06 by NTA (the project's management):

The Inter-Ministerial Tenders Committee headed by Mr. Hagai Miller, a Senior Deputy Accountant General at the Finance Ministry, has announced to the competing groups 'Metro-Rail' and 'MTS', that they have passed to the next stage of the tender - the Pricing, which will start at the end of this month.

The 3rd group 'Speedan', consisting of PB, Bombardier Transportation, Kardan, Tahal, Shafir, and Aviv, lost the tender.

The committee's reasons for Speedan's losing are: Not introducing an experienced public transport operator as a member of the group; Change in the group's composition made after the original composition has already been approved by the committee for competition; Retreat of one of the partners from legal and financial commitments taken by him.

Mr. Miller has mentioned that NTA gave Speedan all the opportunities to make corrections, but sufficient answers have not been given.

The Chairman of NTA Mr. Benny Waknin said that, towards the end of 2006, the winning bidder is to be selected; He added that preparatory works are being carried out along the whole alignment of the Red Line to ease the winner's start of works.

Just to remind the reader:

'MTS' consists of: Africa-Israel, Egged buses company, Siemens Transport, CCECC, and Soares Da Costa.

'Metro-Rail' consists of: Shikun-U-Binui, Ashtram, Alstom Transport, Connex, Vinci, and Zublin.

The real estate businessman Sunny Kahn has received a permission from the Tel-Aviv Municipality to build an underground mall of 12000 sq.m. under Tel-Aviv Savidor station, to be integrated within the Red Line alignment.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). Re: 72:10. LMS 2-8-0 70414: THE FILM.

From Paul: "This short film and queries surrounding it were mentioned in 72:10. Since then I have searched further and turned up File Kaf/90/86 in the IRM Archives which answers those questions. The file is entitled 'Brussels Exhibition' and deals with IR's participation in the UIC (International Union of Railways) pavilion at the Brussels World Exhibition in May 1958 which coincided with Israel's, and IR's, tenth anniversary. Initially the IR role in events was planned to be very modest: a professional photographer took a colour transparency (also found in File Kaf/90/86, still sharp but now almost monochrome) of a German-built diesel railcar set at Jerusalem station about September 1957 to show the modern face of Israel Railways, and at first that was considered enough for the pictorial display. However, apparently in November 1957, the idea of making a film came to be discussed, though whose idea it was is not recorded. Things moved quickly and, on 10th. January 1958, M. Gabrielli the IR Public Relations Officer wrote to the Secretary General, General Manager's Office. Swiss Federal Railways, Berne, Switzerland, saying that "The film is now in preparation and should be ready by the end of April." Later correspondence shows that the film was first screened in Berne before going on to the Brussels Exhibition.

With his letter of 10/1/57 Gabrielli appended an outline of the plot: "Steam Engine no 143 [sic!!!]. 35mm. 13 minutes. Hebrew. Black and White.

Story: Journey of an old engine from Beer-Sheba to Haifa, going home to its shed on its last run. Background: Various features of railway-work and railway-men's life. Story centres about the engine-driver's young son who, for once, is allowed to join his father on a trip."

Which sums up the contents quite well though, fortunately, 70414 was kept very much the star of the show. But where on earth did that spurious engine number 143 come from?

So we can now be certain that the film was shot in the winter of 1958 with 70414 finally being withdrawn from service in the following October. And where does that leave us with the vexing question about ex-ESR 2-6-0 No. 550 and its fleeting appearance in the movie? Referring again to the monthly listings of engine kilometres in File Kaf/68 (see 72:10)

it can be seen that 550 had been Out of Service, evidently dumped at Qishon Works, since April 157. (This is the same month that it was recorded as first going into IR service, so it seems to have failed very quickly and seriously.) It was Returned to Service in March 1958, i.e. after filming had been completed. This means that the apparent contradiction of dates is nicely resolved, and that 550 was indeed where and when it should be. One wonders, though, what prompted this return to work, for 550 looks pretty derelict in the film.

While we're on the subject, there is also a short thirty-second newsreel clip showing USATC 0-6-0T IR No. 21 at Lod on 27th. February 1959, this being the official last run by a steam engine in Israel. It was shown in local cinemas under the title 'Hadashot HaAretz' ('News of the Land'). There is a video copy of the clip in the IRM Archives."

(b). Re. 732:07:(a) - THE MISHMAR HA'EMEK MANURE TROLLEY.

Paul notes, in his inimitable style:- "I was much intrigued by mention of this short line between cattle shed and nearby manure heap. The note about a lack of confirmation seems to introduce an element of doubt about its existence. Either way, therefore, one may quite justifiably, if improperly, refer to the line as the Bullshit Railway."

(c). Re: 70:05:(d) and 72:07:(l): SALE OF OLD LOCOS.

Paul notes: "According to 'Continental Railway Journal' No. 146 of Summer 006, "FEPSA [of Argentina] has ordered four more G12's for 2006 delivery. Upgrading of the locos for further use has been carried out by NREC (USA)." Could these be from the batch of six redundant IR diesels despatched from Israel in August 2005?"

(d). THE GAZA UNDERGROUND.

Sybil Ehrlich writes: "Some Middle East underground railways have been discovered... but I'm unable to get photos!!!

This is an extract published in *The Jerusalem Post* of an interview by editor David Horovitz with Maj.-Gen. (res.) Doron Almog, the general who kept terrorists from crossing into Israel from Gaza for three full years. It refers to the tunnels used to smuggle weapons.

DH: "Tell us a little more about the anatomy of a tunnel."

DA: "This one, I believe, was about 60-70 centimeters wide and a meter high. They go along it on a board with wheels or on tracks. It was probably about six or seven meters underground, to avoid detection and collapse. We've seen them 30 meters deep. They put "waiting rooms" along the route, and air pipes out to the surface which they camouflage with plants. It's real expertise. I imagine there are more being dug right now." I asked whether Almog had used the Hebrew word "mesilot" (Railways). He replied in the affirmative."

(e). FOR "ALSTOM" READ "VOSSLOH".

"Misha" sent a query to the Pasim chat-site, but then found his own answer. "I just noticed that on the newer locos (I think numbered 760 and above), the label says "Vossloh" and not "Alstom" any more. As far as their web site says, they are a manufacture in Kiel, Germany and have no relation to Alstom/Bombardier."

The answer is in a quote from the Alstom site:

"Disposal of our Transport activities in Valencia, Spain. On 29 November 2004, we signed a binding agreement to sell our Transport activities of the factory in Valencia, Spain, to Vossloh. This factory, located north of Valencia, was built in 1990 and as of the end of fiscal year 2004/05 employed 420 people. It specialises in the manufacturing of locomotives and bogies as well as non modular trains for the regional market. This transaction was closed on 31 March 2005."

I suppose the locos will still be referred to as "Alstoms"!!

(f). Re: 72:07(a) LUDD JUNIOR.

My speculations about the location of this station now need reappraisal following the discovery of a large PR map dated 14/04/1925 (IRM File no.P/1/8). This map, by no means precise, shows a station called Lydda North approximately where I'd surmised Lydda Junior to have been situated. Included as part of the map is a table of distances and this lists Lydda North as being at Km 18.500 from Jaffa. I remain confused. There could not have been two contemporary stations at this spot. We know from 72:07(a) that Lydda Junior was closed on 01/11/1922 so I can only surmise that it must have been reopened and renamed Lydda North sometime before April 1925. Even so, I am not convinced by this possible sequence of events and, anyway, Lydda North itself seems to disappear quickly, judging from known documents. (P.C.)

(g). Re 68:6(b) and 72:10(5). The Last HR train in Israel.

I do not wish to labour the point about this melancholy event but the following letter from File Kaf/4/6 in the IRM Archives shows that, while the last HR train evidently ran in September 1951 as noted in the above two references, there were unsuccessful efforts over the next year or so to persuade IR to reintroduce a freight service to Afula. The letter is dated 22/5/1952 and was written by A. Efrati, then the Acting GM, in reply to an enquiry of nearly three months earlier from the governmental department overseeing IR. It translates as follows:

"There was no practical approach on which to base the operation of the Haifa - Afula line with 2-3 trains a week for the 'Even v'Sid' company alone, and no justification for the existence of this line unless there was a need to answer demands for transport by the general public. It makes no difference to the situation if an intensive effort was made with one customer or another. The fact is that we advertised the [re]opening of the line in newspapers, but did not receive even one order for the transport of a single wagon.

Since there was no justification for working the line either operationally or commercially, and we saw no chance of recouping an investment of tens of thousands of Lirat needed to refurbish the rolling stock and track, it was decided to cease further treatment of this question".

If the General Manager sounds bitter about this episode then he had every right to do so. IR had been pestered by people in Afula demanding that a regular freight service be restarted, had already spent money the previous summer on basic repairs and preparations, and then found not even one customer forthcoming! 'Even v'Sid' would have been intending to transport stone, presumably from their quarry served by a siding at Km.4 near Beled-esh-Sheikh as I cannot recall any rail-connected quarry belonging to them between there and Afula. No doubt this stone traffic was intended for the Afula direction. There was no need for an HR train service between Haifa and Km.4 as this short section was already being served by standard gauge trains running on dual gauge track. (P.C.)

74:07

Another photo of the aftermath of the missile attack on the Haifa Depot



74:08

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. EGYPT.

(i). TRAVELLER'S REPORT. From "C.R.J." No. 146, Summer 2006 pp.589f:- This report is based on a correspondent's visit in January 2006.

Photography. Previous reports "have indicated that photography on Egyptian National Railways' stations seemed to be tolerated, but this was most definitely not the case at Cairo (Ramses Square), the main station in Cairo. There were policemen at each ticket barrier and on every platform (usually one at each end), and our correspondent was threatened with arrest if he did not put his camera away."

Cairo Metro: "There are two standard-gauge Metro lines in Cairo, operated by trains of overhead-wire EMUs painted light blue. Both lines run in tunnels on the city centre section of their routes. The central underground section of Line 1 opened in 1987, connecting two existing ENR lines; Line 2 opened in 1996. A short extension of Line 2 is under construction, and a Line 3 is planned."

Cairo Transport Authority. "This operates the so-called 'Misr el Gedeeda Metro' which is a much older metre-gauge system. It consists of several interconnecting routes worked by elderly LRV's and trams, said to be of communist East European origin. 'Misr el Gedeeda' means New Cairo [sic. - Misr means Egypt. Ed.] and this system had its origin in the Cairo-Heliopolis Electric Railway, built to connect the then-new garden city suburb of Heliopolis to the city centre, and opened in 1908. This is not really a metro, but rather a double-track electric light railway or tramway running on reserved track laid along the central reservations of the wide dual carriageways in the north-east sector of Cairo. There is virtually no on-street running and certainly no tunnel. Two of the routes start from a single-track stub terminus on the other side of Ramses Square from the main railway station (visitors are advised to use the footbridge), and this is the easiest place to find this somewhat elusive unadvertised system for the first time. The front cars have route numbers and destination boards - but exclusively in Arabic - and stops are similarly named only in Arabic script. Our correspondent boarded a very tatty-looking 3-car LRV at Ramses

Square, and reckons he ended up at El Hegaz Square at the far end of the Heliopolis suburb, i.e. near the racecourse, about an hour later. Several other routes branched off along the way, worked by pairs of single-ended LRV's or tramcars coupled back to back. Three distinctly different types of 2-car vehicles were seen as well as the 3-car sets serving the El Hegaz route. Each car carried a roving conductor to whom one paid a flat fare of 25 Piastres (about 2 UK pence). The front coach of the 3-car LRV's was always reserved exclusively for female passengers. Some recent photographs are posted on the Internet at www.MisrElGedeeda.blogspot.com."

(ii). ACCIDENT. On the evening of 04.09.2006 an accident occurred north of Cairo, when a passenger train collided with a goods train. Early reports spoke of at least 15 dead and 35 injured, though these figures were expected to rise.

B. TURKEY.

(a). ANTALYA TRAMWAY.

From CRJ 146, Summer 2006, p.606: "The town of Antalya, with a population of more than 200,000, lies on the Mediterranean coast and has been described as a gem of the Turkish Riviera. It is not served by the national railway system, the nearest TCDD station being at Burdur, about 100km. as the crow flies to the north. However, it does possess the nucleus of a tramway system, Antalya Büyükşehir Belediyesi. The first, and so far only line opened in 1999. of standard gauge and 5 km. long, it runs roughly parallel with the coast, from Müze, where there is a turning circle, in the west, to Zerdalilik, where the depot is located, in the south-east. The track is single, with three passing loops and nine stops, marked by blue boards. Road traffic is not allowed to run along the trackbed, but this is ignored by motor cycles and scooters. At Müze (Museum, with very good exhibits) the anti-clockwise turning circle is on the cliffs, in a very spectacular location above Antalya beach. The

rolling stock comprises six bogie tramcars, second-hand from a German municipal operator, though our reporter who visited Antalya in late March 2006 was unable to ascertain origin or builder. The cars operate in pairs, with two sets in use and the third spare. The fare of 1 YTL (New Turkish Lira, about GBP 0.45) is payable to the conductor who sits at a counter at the front of the car. Frequency is 10 to 15 minutes. Although the tramway was apparently built with tourists primarily in mind, the tourist guides seem to know little about it, and all signs are in Turkish only. The line is, in fact, also well patronised by local people, especially on the residential south-eastern section. It is planned that the present short single route will ultimately be developed into a 41km. system."

C. IRAN.

(a). ZAHEDAN SERVICE

ENDS. Further to the report in 73:08 (J):- A report in CRJ notes: and confirms: "From 7th. March 2006 the trains which connected Quetta in Pakistan with the Iranian border town of Zahedan were withdrawn indefinitely, following repeated bombings and rocket attacks on the railway within Pakistan. The service had consisted of a fortnightly passenger train each way and a weekly return freight."

D. SYRIA.

NEW RAILTOUR PLAN.

The Indefatigable DGEG (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eisenbahngeschichte) is planning a Railtour 11th. - 26th. February 2007:- "With Steam and Diesel Through The Orient", the preliminary notice describes the following: "A complete travelling over the Syrian railway network on standard and narrow gauge. Syria has a standard gauge network totalling 2460km. The aim of the DGEG tour is to discover this. The lines, many of which are used only for freight, will be traversed by special train. The tour will be expanded to incorporate visits to cultural sites, including

Palmyra, the Krak of the Crusaders and the Water Wheels on the Orontes in Syria as well as Petra and the Wadi Rum in Jordan. The Programme includes Jordan with a new steam train on the Akaba Railway to Wadi Rum, as well as the Amman - Damascus section of the Hedjaz line and in Syria the line down the Yarmuk Valley." More details can be obtained from DGEG Bahnreisen GmbH, Postfach 10 20 45, 47410 Moers, Germany, fax. (49) - 2841 - 56012, or reisen@dgeg.de

E. SAUDI ARABIA.

HEDJAZ BRIDGE DEMOLITION DISPUTE.

From: Trainorders.com. "Jeddah. 05/09/06. Saudi Arabia's tourism chief yesterday blasted Madinah municipal authorities for demolishing part of the historic Hejaz Railway and asked them to give a convincing explanation for the wrongdoing.

Prince Sultan ibn Salman, secretary-general of the Supreme Commission for Tourism (SCT), said that the demolition of the Hijaz railway bridge in Madinah was an unacceptable mistake.

"We are still awaiting a convincing explanation from the Madinah Municipality on the circumstances and reasons that led to the razing of the railway bridge and why they decided to demolish it", he told Asharq Al-Awsat, a sister publication of Arab News'.

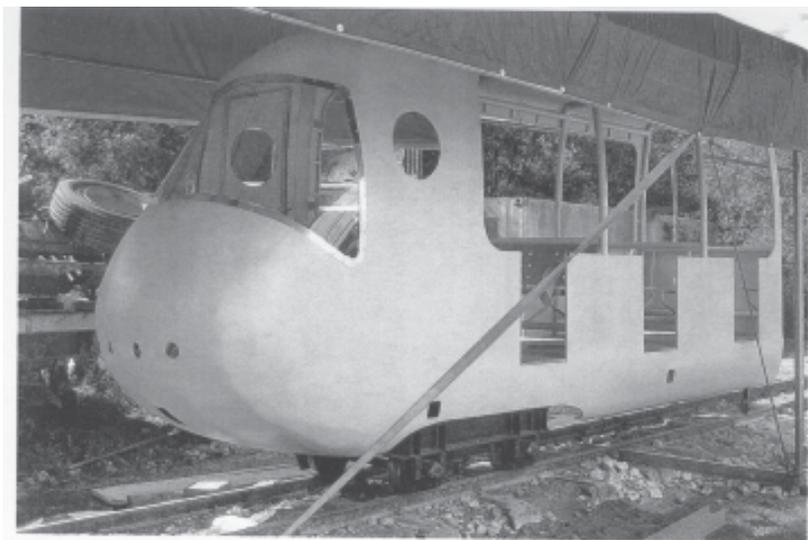
"Destruction of historical sites and antiques are unacceptable", he said and praised Saudis for protesting the destruction of the railway bridge. "These are signs of cultural progress", he said about the protests.

The Madinah Municipality recently razed the Aqiq Bridge, which was part of the railway, drawing outrage from both historians and residents. The bridge suffered structural damage during last year's floods."

F. OMAN.

(See Harakevet 68:8:(G).) From: "Eisenbahn - Österreich" 9/2006, p.448. By "mosw".

"The engineering firm Wunder in Rasing near Mariazell is building a battery-powered railcar set for a tourist railway in Oman. The line, approx. 1 km. in length, leads to the entrance of a stalagmite cave at Al Hoota, which should be accessible for visitors from the coming December.



According to the Press Office of the Federal Ministry for Economy and Labour, other Austrian firms are also involved in the opening-up of this cave system for tourists. The Sultanate of Oman only opened itself to individual tourism in 1990.

The vehicle comprises three articulated sections. The centre coach is powered by two DC motors; the ends form driving coaches, which are hung onto the central coach. The total length of the train is 20m., a width of 1600mm. on 760mm. gauge. Capacity is 16 in the centre coach and 11 in each end coach - total 38.

The electrical equipment comprises eight 48 V batteries, which when linked in parallel deliver 150 Amps each and are suitable for an ambient temperature of up to 50 deg. C. It is possible to load them fully overnight. The two 6kW motors using 48V DC each drive one axle of the centre coach via a chain. The smallest radius that can be traversed is 60m., the top speed on the level is 15 km/h; the vehicle can traverse gradients to a maximum of 18.1%.

The set has already been to Kienberg-Gaming for tests on the narrow-gauge museum railway there; these revealed a need for improvement of the drive chain. The operator of the Museum Tramway at Mariazell is reported to have played a major role in obtaining this contract, and negotiations apparently were carried out

over several years. A delivery date has not yet been made public."

The photo shows the unit - clearly modelled on a Jumbo Jet! - under construction in the yard at Wunder's works.

74:09.

REVIEW.

"THE WORLD'S GREATEST RAILWAY JOURNEYS. "TUNISIA AND ISRAEL".

DVD "Railway" series. NPB / EO International. APWDVD 1111. "Pal 4.3 Academy format, disc format DVD-5." www.musicbank.co.uk. "Part of a series of over 50 worldwide railway journeys."

This is a strange DVD. One does not know what to make of it. We are grateful to Mostyn Lewis for bringing it to our attention and arranging a copy for us, but - what can one say? It is cheap, (just GBP 2.00) and one gets one's money's worth. The programmes are 25 minutes long and composed of touristic travelogues with a few railway scenes thrown in. These scenes are in themselves rare, and unrepeatable, and therefore for the price, it is worth buying, since any video sequences of some of these systems are rare. But do not expect an in-depth review of a railway system.

The DVD we have contains several trailers, and a programme on Tunisia, and one on Israel. We shall confine this review to the latter. An irritating voice, with an irritating and never ending 'musak' background,

explains to us earnestly that Israel is where Jesus was born, and then we have shots of Jerusalem, the Via Dolorosa, some stereotype Jew at the Wailing Wall. Later there are extensive sequences of Tel Aviv, its architecture, its beaches, the Carmel Market, and old Jaffa. All very nice. But nothing of Lod or Qishon.

The film bears a 1998 date at the end which explains a lot - for example, how we observe a train hauled by G12 116 departing the old Jerusalem station on a train of Yugoslav coaches, passing the old semaphores and the signal box! Later there are nice aerial and panning shots of this and similar trains (some of different stock) before 116 arrives at Tel Aviv Merkaz and eventually the journey continues on a train formed of several IC3 units which then, near Binyamina (I think) are on single track but passing a section of trackbed prepared for doubling..... There are interior shots, already historic, of older and IC3 stock. Then we enter Haifa Bat Galim, and suddenly are at Haifa East watching containers being shunted, get a brief glimpse inside the Railway Museum (with its "old train cars") and the interior of the PR saloon coach, before exploring ancient ruins at Caesarea (!), returning to Bat Galim for a few shots as we suddenly head by IC3 to Nahariyya (we are solemnly told that "the train can be driven from both the front and the rear" - technically incorrect, it means that either end can be the front), and enter the station there (before it was rebuilt - only one platform and a very jointed second track) - and then we explore the beach, learn how honeymooners come here, double back to Akko and the citadel and the port - and then fade out, leaving this historic biblical blah... blah...

I didn't count exactly but would reckon the railway content was no more than 15%. It was not a cheap film to make, with all those aerial shots, and the quality of the camera work is good; There are memories here, for those of us who recall the system before its total transformation in the last decade. Someone, somewhere must have made a lot more film material, and it is to be hoped that they'll put it all together in a more specialist film.

74:10.

SIGNALMAN ON THE TRANS-PERSIAN RAILWAY.

Signalman Charles Chapman spent 2 1/2 years from February 1942 in Persia providing the essential communications for the British-operated railway from the Persian Gulf to Tehran, scene of gruelling efforts of 8F 2-8-0's. His memoirs were recorded and transcribed by Neil Herapath and they were published in 'Black Eight' No. 119 (Summer 2006) pp.35f.

"Before the War I trained as a GPO telegraphist and also served in the Territorial Army. After call-up in 1939 I served for a while in the Royal Engineers on searchlights before I was transferred to the Royal Corps of Signals because of my experience as a telegraphist. After a tedious period at Corps HQ at Taunton, an opportunity arose to join a Railway Telegraph Operating Section going overseas.

We sailed from Liverpool on 7th. December 1941, the day of Pearl Harbour, on board the liner 'Andes', changing to a fish transport ship at Durban which took us via Bombay and Calcutta and back to Basrah in Iraq by February 1942. From Basrah we travelled by desert road to Ahwaz in Persia. The Railway Telegraph Operating Section was staffed to man two stations, but was tasked to man seven. These were at the port of Bandar-e-Shahpur (now Bandar-e-Imam Khomeni), Ahwaz, Andimeshk, Danod, Qom, Sultanabad and Tehran. As a result of this shortfall in staff, two men had to operate a signalling station for 24 hours a day. Fortunately there was very little traffic at night and probably only one or two trains in each direction per day. Sections between the few signalling stations with their crossing loops were very long which limited capacity on the line. The civil communications were in such a poor state that the British Army in 1942 had to replace the telegraph lines. The signalmen used teleprinters operating over landlines as their main form of communication.

The railway from Bandar-e-Shahpur to Tehran had been built by an international consortium, such that the Belgians drove the tunnels through the mountains, the British supplied the track and the Germans provided the locomotives from a firm Ferro-Stahl. These locomotives were used by the Railway Operating Department of the Royal Engineers alongside the Stanier 8F locomotives.

For the operation of the railway, the route was divided into two sections. From Bandar-e-Shahpur to Andimeshk two locos could haul a 1,000 ton train across the fairly level desert-like terrain where temperatures in the sun in summer could reach 140 deg.F. These temperatures and the very cold temperatures in the mountains initially caused problems with the injectors on the 8F's, but the Royal Engineers happened to have a certain Lt. Stanier in their number who was able to resolve the problem. His forebear was their designer!

At Andimeshk the line climbed into the mountains, so 500 tons was offloaded onto a convoy of (grossly overladen) 3-ton lorries which rolled away like a wagon-train on their journey along rough mountain roads to Tehran and on to the Caspian Sea (a round trip of

two weeks). The remaining 500 tons was then hauled by two locomotives, with a third as banker, across the mountain ranges to Tehran where Russian crews took over for the next stage.

For the down empty trains, the numbers of each wagon had to be booked at Ahwaz by the Railway Engineers and the signalmen would help them in this task, so we soon became proficient at reading Persian numerals. These numbers would then be sent down to the port of Bandar-e-Shahpur.

I recall an example of the confusion which could occur when working in mixed languages. A new soldier in the marshalling yard at Ahwaz did not know Persian and could not understand why the local shunters repeatedly sent the empty wagons into line 9 when he wanted them sent to line 6, not realising that his repeated shouts of "No, no!" were duly being interpreted as the Persian number 9.

One day a Russian came into my signal office in Ahwaz with a Russian - Persian interpreter and a Persian - English interpreter. After failing to make ourselves understood via our interpreters, we relied on the similarities of technical languages to reach an agreement directly. I agreed to recommend to my headquarters that the British signalmen would send Russian messages over the rebuilt British communications lines using a phonetic English alphabet. This was accepted as standard practice and to this day I can remember the Russian phrases used for the passing of railway traffic.

In Tehran the British signalmen occupied rooms on the ground floor of the railway station, while their Russian counterparts, responsible for the remainder of the route to a port on the coast of the Caspian Sea, occupied rooms in the basement. The Russians belonged to IranSovTransTehran. Messages would be passed up from the coast to the British signalmen in Russian using a phonetic English alphabet and passed by hand to offices in the Russian section who transferred

them on. The Russians used teletype machines and not teleprinters for their communications.

A small example of Russian-British co-operation. While in a Tehran street one day I was "chatting" in broken technical language to one of my IranSovTrans counterparts when we saw a Persian policeman about to hit a child, so we both jumped on the policeman!

The Shah was pro-German in his sympathies but local brigands tended to favour the British. While I was stationed at Darud, 5,000 ft. up in the mountains, I was greeted by one brigand equipped with a Lee-Enfield rifle on a well-groomed horse in a local village - that night the village was raided. One reason why the brigands there remained "friendly" was that the British military provided rudimentary first-aid to the brigands who lived in a neighbouring village. It was official policy for the signalmen not to be armed at any time on the grounds that they might well be shot for the sake of their rifles. Linesmen, who maintained the telegraph pole route, were allowed to carry pistols but not rifles for the same reason. While it was pleasantly warm but not too hot at Darud in summer, it was cold in winter with some snow, but not enough to present a major problem in keeping the line open.

When Persia eventually declared war on the Allied side, one of the first people to be arrested was the Chief of the Persian Railway Telegraph service, as he was suspected to be behind the instances of sabotage on the cable route.

An example of innovation. Signalman 'Polly' Parrot, an instrument mechanic by trade, devised a means of sending telegraphic messages over a radio link by connecting teleprinters to radios using 5 impulses. He tried it out at night-time when all was quiet and later it was found possible to send messages to India. While most of the RCoS signalmen were former GPO employees, there were also some men who had been railway signalmen before the war.

As well as the up traffic, which included food as well as arms and ammunition, I remember that, probably in 1944, large numbers of Poles, men, women and children, who had been released from internment in Russia, travelled down from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. The men became recruits for a Polish Army to serve somewhere in the Middle East, but I did not know where the women ended up, although quite a number were sent to hospital.

When the Americans arrived in Persia to take over the operation of supplying the Russians, a band of very rough Americans built a new port at Khorramshah and a new tarmac road across the desert from this port to Ahwaz. However, the American telecommunications equipment for operating the railway was sunk en route, so the British signalmen stayed behind to train American soldiers on British teleprinter equipment (like the Russians, the Americans were used to using teletype machines.)

The Americans, of course, were very familiar with operating single-track lines where they were used to letting trains through stations instead of one station at a time. Against the advice of the British signalmen they insisted on applying this in Persia with the inevitable consequence that a train hauled by an 8F met one hauled by a Ferro-Stahl locomotive head on (the Ferro-Stahl loco came off the worse.) Fortunately it was in a fairly flat section where visibility was good, the trains had braked and nobody was injured.

Before I left Persia, the Americans had introduced diesel locos, which were much better suited to the task with their smaller wheels giving greater tractive effort, not forgetting the numerous single-bore tunnels in the mountains.

The Army's Chief Medical Officer in Persia set a limit of 2 years for men stationed in the local climate. In fact I had completed 2 1/2 years in Persia before I was posted to the Canal Zone in Egypt. Although the 8F's were also transferred to Egypt about this time, my own association with them ceased, since I was henceforth engaged in general communications work for the Army."

TRAVELLERS- TALES A VICTORIAN HOLIDAY SLIDE SHOW.

At the Saltaire Club & Institute on March 16, 1871:

The subject chosen by the lecturer, Mr Titus Salt Junior, was 'Reminiscences of a tour in Egypt and the Holy Land'.

There was a large and appreciative audience. A large screen 25 feet square was suspended above the platform, upon which coloured photographs of the principal scenes of interest visited by the lecturer, were reflected by the oxy-hydrogen lime light lantern.

Mr Salt commenced his lecture by saying that he started from London, on the 16th February 1865, and went via Paris and Marseilles to Alexandria, touching at Malta, where he went ashore for about two hours, and was struck with the numbers of things he saw which reminded him of old England - some rather sad than otherwise, such as drunken sailors and soldiers. He described what were his impressions and feelings when he first landed among the Orientals, and gave several amusing illustrations of the customs of the people and the roguery which they attempted to practice upon all strangers passing through their country. He described a railway ride towards Cairo, and mentioned the fact that all the railway officials were Englishmen, and that the carriages were noticed by himself and his party to be very much like those of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company. On making enquiries they were told that they were the worn-out carriages of that company which had been bought and renovated for service in that country. Mr Salt and his friends preferred to ride in some open carriages which were attached to the train, that they might see the country better; and on the journey, which was conducted at a speed much lower than on English railroads, they passed many ruins which had been excavated from the sand only to be buried again in the course of time.

The natives of those parts took kindly to the trains as a means of locomotion, but they were very guilty of riding without tickets. Europeans were laughed at for taking tickets, and told that the cheapest way to travel was to 'tip' the guard, who there also acted as ticket collector. Thus the natives travelled at extremely low fares, and this, of course, would not tend much to increase the dividends of the shareholders, who were mostly Englishmen. (Laughter)

Mr Salt then described Cairo, and went on to speak of their visit to the tombs of the Mameluke kings, to the bazaars of Cairo, and to some of the pyramids. He and his friends mounted the largest of the pyramids. He experienced considerable difficulty in the ascent, although he was assisted by three natives, two to pull him by the hands and another to push him. Not being able to speak the native tongue he could not make them understand that he should like to rest. (Laughter) The top of the pyramid was about 13 feet square, and on it was cut the names of a great many travellers who had ascended it. Many English names were there, for Englishmen always carve their names. (Laughter) The pyramid covered an area quite as large as Saltaire Park. He spoke of the Sphynx, which he said, was 60 feet high, and had been carved out of a solid piece of rock.

Having concluded his account of his tour in Egypt, Mr Salt introduced two persons attired in the male and female costume of the Orientals. He said he had bought the female dress while in Egypt, and had walked about in it, the natives not knowing but that he was a woman, as it is the custom of the females to show nothing of their faces but the eyes. (Laughter)

The tour through the Holy Land, and the pilgrimage of his party to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Tomb of Absalom, Jericho, Bethlehem, Samaria, Nazareth, Capernaum, and other places of note in Scripture history were next described. Mr Salt related instances of the impostures which the natives carried on in order to deceive and fleece travellers, and towards the conclusion he gave a description of Damascus, which he said on account of its antiquity was entitled to the appellation 'Eternal City'. The views which were exhibited were very numerous and well executed, and enabled the audience to realise the scenes depicted and described.

At the termination of the proceedings, a cordial vote of thanks was passed to Mr Salt for his kindness in giving the entertainment.

The Saltaire Magazine, April 1871

Titus Salt Junior (1843-1887) was a younger son of the wealthy textile mill owner, Sir Titus Salt, who, between 1853 and 1876, built the model village of Saltaire, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, to house his workers away from the crowded, polluted and unhealthy city of Bradford. The village was a complete community, with mills, houses, churches, shops, schools.

Officially opened in November 1872, but clearly in use some time earlier, was the impressive Saltaire Club & Institute, which was both a social club and an educational institution. The Lecture Hall could seat 800, and was presumably well-filled to hear this inaugural lecture by the Club's President.

How one wishes the pictures Titus Junior showed, or the journal he surely must have kept, still existed, but it seems they do not. However, some boxes of glass photographic negatives, several of which depict scenes in Egypt, were given by Titus' great-grandson to the Bradford Industrial Museum. Anyone wishing to examine them should contact: Eugene Nicolson, Curator, Bradford Industrial Museum, tel: 01274 - 031 756.

Notes to pictures on back cover

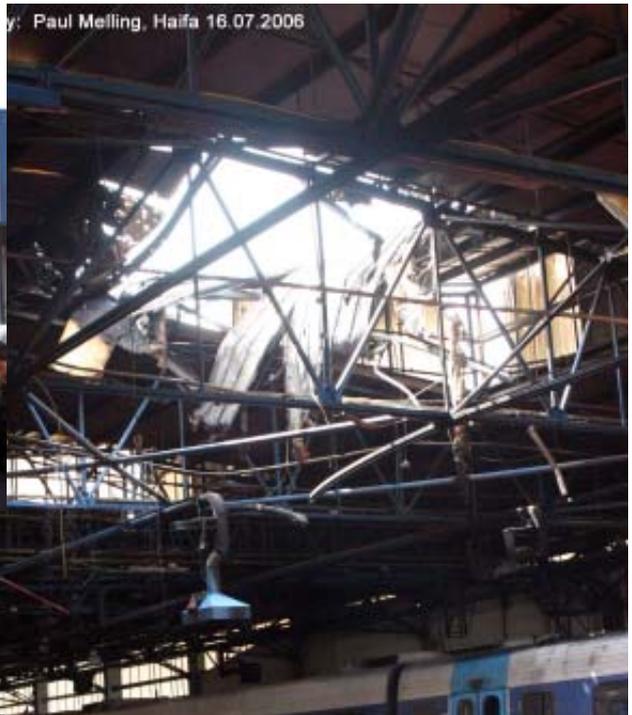
My father was one of the first journalists to arrive at the scene on Sunday morning, picture 0774 being from about 45 minutes after the rocket hit the IC3 and passenger coach maintenance shed of the Haifa depot. This shed is brand new, the part hit by both rocket attacks is a couple of years old, the newest extension has just opened. It stands at the location of the original Palestine Railways locomotive shed, and picture 0830 shows the entry hole blasted by the first rocket. According to the TV pictures, another similar hole was blasted just a few meters from there by the second hit, two days later.

The two IC3 sets that stood either side of the hit site were numbers 17 (picture 0852) and 35 (picture 0855). Both sustained quite a lot of exterior damage in the first hit, at least those units nearest the hit nos. 7017 and 7417 in set 17, nos. 7035 and 7435 in set 35. From the pictures it appears the third unit of each (nos. 7217 and 7235 respectively) were not hit, but it seems both sets were still standing there when the second rocket hit. Since the second hit with a few meters further along the shed, it may well be the case that these two were also hit, though I cannot confirm that yet.

You can obviously publish my father's pictures, and you can also pass them on to any other railway journal, with the sole condition that if they are published, they are clearly credited to my father.

Chen Melling

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Photos showing the results of the missile strike on Haifa Station. Pictures courtesy of Paul Melling and YNet.