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הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
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81.01.

Hedjaz Jordan Railway Pacific No. 85 (NSS 1613 - Nippon Shariyo Seizo - orig. built 1953 for Thailand, but not delivered, workplates later altered to 1959 on sale to Jordan - see Tourret p. 117) stands in its newest finery at Amman. (Photo taken from Globotours brochure - see inside.)

EDITORIAL.

It has been another busy Quarter. In Jerusalem the first trams have arrived at last, though the scheme is well over budget; Work continues on the high-tech, heavily-engineered and probably electrified line that will lead to the city; Or does it? As we go to press yet another scandal and threat to the scheme erupts. The Israel Railways are suffocating under their own success and desperately awaiting the delivery of the new rolling stock that has been ordered and promised. Meanwhile, in Jordan it appears that the old Hedjaz Railway, which has been 'written-off' so often before, may this time truly be seeing its last days as plans for a thorough modernisation and rebuilding take shape. There is a German saying to the effect that those who have been witten-off as dead in fact live the longest; the Hedjaz line has survived so many attempts to revive it (Yes - that sentence is intended to read so!) - but maybe this time the fate of the antique anachronism is indeed sealed. Back in Israel, from Haifa we have as yet no news of any developments to replace Paul (how can anyone really replace Paul?) at the Railway Museum, or of publication of his last book.

81.03.

One of the new Siemens coaches for IR, being built in Slovenia, on trial at Graz Don Bosco. (Photo: Copied and enlarged from 'Lok Magazin' June 2008.)

81.04.

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). PROBLEMS WITH ROLLING STOCK DELIVERY.

From a Press release:- "The new Israel Railways General Manager Mr. Harel recently met with senior management of Siemens Transportation regarding their latest updating about the delivery of the 87 single-deck push/pull coaches; This has been delayed from June to August 2008, but only 20 will arrive by that date (hopefully...), while the balance of 67 will not arrive before October or November 2008 if at all!

This severe situation has brought Mr. Harel to send a strong letter to Siemens General Manager Mr. Peter Lauscher, advising him that the Railways are considering an appeal to court, accusing the consortium in violating the contract; the railways are also requesting that Siemens pay a penalty for the delays.

But none of the options considered give a good picture: purchasing rolling stock without new tenders is not permitted legally, while even with a quick tender, the best date for delivery could be only at the end of 2009! Meanwhile, the reorganization in Siemens has brought the firing of the General Manager of Siemens Israel, Mr. Oren Aharonson."

In 'Lok Magazin' June 2008 p.27 - is a picture of one of the Israeli coaches at Graz Don Bosco Halt, hauled by ÖBB 1042 007.

"Siemens TS received from Israel Railways some two years ago a contract for the delivery of 86 passenger coaches, which are to be used in fast Inter-City and Regional services. The coaches are built at the Siemens daughter company TVT Nova in Maribor, Slovenia. There is an option for a further 585 vehicles. One of the coaches passed its climatic tests in the wind tunnel at Rail Tec Arsenal (RTA) in Vienna. On 4th. April the coach was returned to Maribor. Due to the special dimensions of the Israeli coaches it could not take the shorter route via the Semmering but instead travelled via Wien - Linz - Selzthal - St. Michael - Graz - Spielfeld-Strass - Maribor."

What an amazing coincidence! Of course, the majority of the coaches IR used from the 1950's to the 1990's (and some are still in use!) were also built at Maribor, at the same factory, then known as the Boris Kidric Works! And at least one vehicle was ready and mobile in April..... The photo shows it to be similar to those built for Connex first for the Berlin-Leipzig and then for the Marschahn Hamburg-Westerland trains; rather boxy, with a low-level centre section, looking rather like the lower half of a double-deck coach, they certainly take some getting used to, aesthetically. The cover of issue 74 does reveal,

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in the background, the 'stepped' nature of the levels.

This is how the story appeared on www.haaretz.com on 20.03.2008:

SLOW TRAIN TO BETTER SERVICE. By Avi Bar-Eli

"Do you take the train to work? Or regularly use the rail service in some other capacity? Sorry, but we have bad news for you. Siemens recently advised Israel Railways of a third delay in supplying new rolling stock to Israel.

The train cars will arrive, the Ger-



man conglomerate now predicts, some time between August and November this year, which is nine months later than it promised when it won the tender. Israel Railways anticipates an immediate shortage - it just doesn't have enough trains to fill the schedule. It has already began cutting back non-peak traffic, and just wait for the courts to get involved. The Israel Railways management will shortly be putting together a massive lawsuit against Siemens and has meanwhile contacted alternative potential sources of rolling stock, for the potential supply of new train cars as soon as possible.

Siemens won the gigantic Israel Railways tender for single-deck train cars in January 2006. It was supposed to supply 86 cars for about NIS 700 million, and there was an option to supply 585 more for about NIS 4 billion. Israel Railways built the option into the contract to answer the growing demand for train service in Israel, and to supply new routes it meant to open.

The new train cars were supposed to start arriving in December 2007. But last year, Siemens asked to postpone the first shipment and consolidate it with the second, which was scheduled for April 2008.

"Asked" is one way to put it, but Israel Railways didn't have many choices. Already short of rolling stock after two years of not buying any, the situation grew worse, especially as demand for Israel's rail service has been increasing by 14%-15% a year. The result has been trains crowded to the limit of their capacity, disrupted schedules, high maintenance costs and the return to service of carriages that had been slated to be junked.

Four months ago, TheMarker reported that Siemens admitted it apparently wouldn't make the second deadline either, because of technical changes at its production plant in Europe. At first the Israel Railways management figured that Siemens meant it would be a couple of months late, and began studying the legalese of the tender regarding fines for tardiness in supply by the contractor. In parallel, railway management started thinking the unthinkable - to publish new tenders for the immediate procurement of train cars.

Two weeks ago, Israel Railways' new top executive, the retired general Yitzhak "Haki" Harel, met with top people from Siemens Israel's trains division. They promised that the deadlines would be met. Within days, however, Siemens came clean, saying that the carriages would only begin to arrive in August, and that the second shipment would only arrive in October or November of this year.

The Israel Railways management received the notice with utter shock, not to mention frustration, given that Harel had vowed to make scheduling and service - not packing passengers like sardines into tardy trains - Israel Railways' No. 1 priority this year. Israel Railways can hardly fulfill these commitments given its shortage of train cars, and meanwhile, a quick check among potential suppliers indicates that new stock can't be had before the end of 2009. Now, Israel Railways has worked with more than one supplier: for instance, it bought its double-decker train carriages from Bombardier. But it can't just extend a tender from the past, for legal reasons.

So, Harel fired off an irate letter to Siemens fairly new CEO, Peter Loscher, who joined the company in mid-2007 from the outside. Harel wrote that Siemens had apparently broken contract and was causing heavy losses to Israel Railways because of the harm to quality of service and the stain on its good name.

"Israel Railways has already been suffering heavy losses, continuing disruption of schedule and high maintenance costs," Harel wrote, adding that it had been forced to bring trains slated for the junkyard back into service.

Harel asked Loscher to personally intervene in order to minimize the damage: "We hope you will direct your people to take immediate steps so Siemens can reduce the delay in shipment and fulfill its

duties and commitments under the agreement," he wrote.

Meanwhile, as stated, Israel Railways is considering emergency measures, including shortening the routes and reducing the frequency of trains at non-peak hours. A new schedule came into force last Saturday evening. The Be'er Sheva - Tel Aviv line has become an express line that won't stop at Ben Gurion International Airport any more, and passengers on the Jerusalem - Tel Aviv line won't be changing trains at Beit Shemesh any more. Moreover, that line has been cut back to 21 trains per day instead of 29.

The contract with Siemens had attracted fire before ink ever met paper. Even before the winner was announced, complaints were made about the tender procedure. Finally, when Siemens was chosen, the losers - including Bombardier and Alstom - sued to obtain the documents, and complained that Siemens had won based on an unrealistic undertaking about supply dates. Siemens refused to comment for this article."

(b). LEVEL CROSSING RADARS.

The railways are installing radars at several level crossings; one at Ta'avura junction at Ramla on the line to Na'an junction (and from there to Jerusalem and to Beer-Sheva and the south); the second, near Hutzot-Ha-Mifratz mall at Haifa.

(d). WHERE TO PUT THE RUBBLE?

by Gil Zohar, THE JERUSALEM POST
93.04.2008

"While Israel Railways Web site states that the 30-kilometre train line from Modi'in Central to Jerusalem's new terminus opposite the Central Bus Station is slated to open in 2011, that target now seems technically impossible.

According to a report in the financial daily Globes, digging on the two tunnels through the Judean Hills for the high-speed track is going to be delayed until early 2009 because Israel Railways has been unable to find a place to dump the earth removed from the project's 20 km. of tunnels. Israel Railways recently notified the Finance and Transportation ministries that this delay will likely push back the opening of the extension to 2013 or 2014.

Shapir Civil and Marine Engineering Ltd. and the Austrian company Voest-Alpine Schienen GmbH won the construction tender for the NIS 1.5 billion tunnels 18 months ago, but have yet to receive a work permit because of the issue of where to dispose of the rubble."

(e). ELECTRIFICATION.

Background: A few months ago, both the Transport and particularly the Finance Ministries asked the consulting company Parsons-Brinkerhoff for a second

opinion, to define if electric traction is really the only preferred traction for the A1 fast link to Jerusalem, bearing in mind that particularly the section between the junction to Modi'in and Jerusalem is characterized by up to 3% steep and lengthy gradients, tunnels and bridges totalling more than 20 km out of about 35 km between these two points), and with an underground station at Jerusalem at a depth of 80m (under construction).

Parsons-Brinkerhoff, though not negating electrification, concluded that diesel traction would be sufficient.

This was obviously against the Railways' planning aims and just after the Austrian firm Voest-Alpine has been selected as the winner for tunnelling on the mentioned line, and was supposed to start works on March 2008; it should be mentioned, however, that this is not the only reason for the delay in the start on tunnelling - the problem of how to deal with excavated soil is also contributing (see separate item), but as tunnelling and electrification normally go together, it was the Railways' top priority to get the electrification finally approved.

The Railways, therefore, asked from their side for a second opinion from NPC, the consultants of Dutch Railways NS.

From a press release of 15.05.08 by the railways, here are the NPC conclusions:

"There is no any railway line all over the world operated by diesel traction in conditions similar to those on this line; thus the only solution is the use of 5,000 to 6,000 kW electric locomotives capable of pulling the required 10-car formation single-deck trains with 733 seats capacity and weighing about 500 tons; this also conforms to the Ayalon triple-tracked corridor which is limited to 3 trains hourly each direction, [! sic.] namely 2,200 seats, which is also the passenger traffic forecast at peak hours for the coming year after opening the line; the forecast for the first year of operation is 1,000 passengers each direction at peak hours.

Whilst a single electric loco will be able to pull even longer trains or higher capacity trains (e.g. double-deck coaches), two diesel locos would be required for the 10-car formation trains, and definitely three for longer or heavier trains.

Additional advantages: 15% higher speed than diesel traction, minimum air pollution, particularly in tunnels and at the Jerusalem underground station (unlike the pollution spread all over by diesel trains, a power station supplying the current to the line is entirely controlled), and lower life-cycle costs particularly with fuel prices achieving daily new records.

Finally, it should be remembered that the line was planned for electric traction from the outset, and re-planning it for diesel traction will require statutory changes which may not be accepted at all, thus

endangering the whole project".

The Railways' General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Harel (Haki), was, as expected, very satisfied, and said: "The NPC conclusions strengthening the Railways' position that the line must be electrified for all the reasons mentioned; furthermore, NPC also supports the Railways' position of aiming to expand the electrification to all the network's main lines, thus becoming a railway system like those in Western Europe."

(f). SENIOR MANAGEMENT CHANGES AND APPOINTMENTS.

In a press release dated 21.01.08, the railways General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Harel announced the following appointments of senior officers on the railways:

The Railways' Directorate has appointed Mr. Yaakov Efrati as the Chairman of Directorate. His last job was General Manager of the Land Directorate.

Mr. Yariv Katz (38) has been appointed as Deputy General Manager for Infrastructures; he is succeeding 3 Deputy Managers who had been appointed by the former General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky. For the last five years he has been the manager of the Roads and Lighting Department of the Tel-Aviv Municipality; he was earlier the manager of combined projects in the Municipality, as well as an inspector of Roads Planning and building by the public works department. He has the degree as Master of Science in Earthworks, as well as Traffic and Civil Engineering from the Haifa Technion (Technical Institute); He will be responsible on development and maintenance of infrastructures.

Mr. Benjamin Sassi has been appointed as Deputy General Manager for Human Resources. For the last three years he has been the manager of a construction company as well as of a start-up company. He was earlier the commander of the army's recruiting office at Jerusalem, and an Adjutant-General; he has a B.A. in Social Science from the Bar-Ilan University.

Advocate Mrs. Dalia Kotai has been appointed as Human Resources Department Manager. For the past year she has been the manager of human resources at the Taldor high-tech company in Israel. She earlier served in the army's Commander of Soldiers' Private Issues Department, as Human Resources sub-department commander, head of Personnel in technology and logistic department, and head of the Women's Department at the army's central recruiting base. She has the following titles: B.A. of Law from the Academic City of Kiryat-Ono; B.A. of Educational Consultancy and the History of Israel, and M.A. of Business Management from the University of Derby.

Advocate Mr. Yossi Aviram has been appointed as the Manager of the Planning, Organizational, and Systems Department. In the last few years he has fulfilled a variety of jobs at the army's planning department, among them as the head of the planning department, head of military rules and orders, and head of commands and arms, as well as head of multi-year planning and organizational department at the air force. He has a B.A. in Law from the Bar-Ilan University, as well as M.A. in Business Management from the Beer-Sheva University.

On 14.02.08 the General Manager appointed Mr. Amir Shavit as Deputy General Manager for Finance. He has worked for the railways for two years; his last job was as assistant to the former Deputy General Manager for Finance. He was recruited to the railways by the former General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky; they both worked together at the Finance Ministry from which they came.

An additional appointment is expected within a month; the present Spokesman, Mrs. Maly Cohen, has finished her contract; it is known that the new spokesman will also be a woman!

(g). NEW SUMMER 2008 TIMETABLE.

From a press release of 11.03.08 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

The Railways introduced on Saturday night, 15.03.2008 the new summer timetable for 2008; the changes are a part of the efforts to cope with the continuous, steady, and significant rise in passenger traffic, as well as problems caused by intensive infrastructure works to connect the periphery with the centre.

It should be mentioned that during 2007 alone, more than 30 Million passengers were carried - 12% more than in 2006, and the forecast for 2008 is for a further 9% rise over 2007; This means that the rise of traffic is higher than the rise in railway resources.

The most important changes are as follows:

- On the Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheva line (actually Nahariyya - Beer-Sheva), trains will neither pass nor stop any more - (with the exception of two trains in each direction on Sundays) - at Ben-Gurion International Airport; instead they will run directly from Tel-Aviv to Lod; this change will better enable the Railways Administration to cope with delays caused by development works on the line, and will hopefully improve punctuality. The Nahariyya - Haifa - Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheva line is one of the longest operated - totalling about 237 km - and also one with the highest loading factor, and any improvement has a chain effect on almost the whole train traffic; Passengers

from Beer-Sheva who do want to reach the airport by rail will be able to travel up to Tel-Aviv Hahagana station, change trains, and arrive at the airport within 8 minutes.

At this stage, travelling time between Beer-Sheva and Tel-Aviv will not actually improve - despite the avoidance of the airport stop; timings are in fact longer by 8 minutes! The simple reason is that for two years already, the line between Ramla and Beer-Sheva is undergoing massive double-tracking works at a cost of more than \$500 Million; this will continue for the coming three years. It is estimated that within 2 years travelling time will gradually be shortened, while within 3 years it will be only 55 minutes compared with today's 102 minutes; this means that average speed will rise from the present 66.6 km/h to the predicted 124 km/h. At this final stage, the line to the airport will reopen.

- The second important change is the reduction of the number of trains between Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem. 16 services Tel-Aviv - Bet Shemesh, of which 10 continue to Jerusalem; 15 services Bet Shemesh - Tel-Aviv, of which 12 start back from Jerusalem. The result is: fewer trains to Jerusalem, while maintaining the services and frequencies on the highly demanded Tel-Aviv - Beit-Shemesh section. An additional change on this line is that through trains are now run again between Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem, avoiding changing trains at Beit-Shemesh; this does not, however, improve journey times which remain 103 minutes uphill and 90 minutes downhill; some improvements are expected sometime next year when the grade separation works over road No. 3 near Nahal Sorek station and track realignment works at the same area are completed.

- On 01.04.08 the opening of the long awaited Modi'in Central station took place at last! The delay of two weeks was due to development works around the station, to be completed by the Ministry of Housing and Construction which is responsible for all works carried out in the city of Modi'in; this opening marks the completion of the line between Tel-Aviv and Modi'in. According to the Railways' forecast, the line is expected to carry 1 Million passengers during 2008, to rise to 1.2 Million in following years, which equals to more than 4,000 passengers daily.

(Aharon Gazit adds some personal observations:

"The cancelling of the stop at Ben-Gurion airport is a result of numerous complaints from angry passengers who asked why the railways did not do their homework before starting the service, by checking out the real demand for it, and thus punishing those who do not need it and adding 20 minutes of travel?

The railways have actually admitted that they have failed with the special

link between the airport and Lod, which cost more than \$1 Million and now will barely be used; the frequent delays on the line just worsen the situation!

On the line to Jerusalem it seems that railways still choose the easy solution; although they are providing a seamless journey, they continue to operate expensive IC3 dmus which are not suitable for the sharply curved Beit-Shemesh - Jerusalem section (as well as on the Beer-Sheva - Dimona line), which are used by few passengers, instead of operating cheap - though more suitable - light railcars or rail-buses!

The main problem which the Railways face is shortages of rolling stock, and as already reported, all depends on the supply of single-deck trains from Siemens; the latest information speak about 20 cars to be supplied in June 2008, but even this is not certain as yet!"

Sybil Ehrlich adds that "Beit Shemesh will no longer be an interchange station. Trains on the Jerusalem line all start in Tel Aviv (not Kfar Saba) and continue all the way to Jerusalem except for a few off-peak ones that terminate at Beit Shemesh."

(h). MORE ON MODI'IN CENTRAL OPENING.

From w w w . h a a r e t z . c o m, 02.04.2008: "Modi'in on track as central railway station finally opens - 12 years behind schedule." By Ofri Ilani

"Simcha and Michael Ben Akun have lived in Modi'in for 10 years, nearly since its inception. Like many there, they make the daily commute to and from their jobs in the Dan Region, which includes Tel Aviv. "Modi'in is a success. It's close to everything," they say, repeating the city's unofficial motto. But Simcha qualifies that statement: "We are Orthodox, so the entertainment culture is not that important to us, but a lot of secular people we know say they have nowhere to go."

Modi'in's official motto is "city of the future" - a well-planned urban promise that is supposed to come true at some point. In the meantime it's in something of a coma. Quality of life is high and real estate prices are booming, but the fabric of urban life in "the planned city" still needs a good push.

Yesterday it got one: 12 years after its foundation, Modi'in opened its central train station, connecting it to the Dan Region. Station manager Avraham Vaknin says it is the country's largest train station, with three concourses measuring 3,000 square metres in total. "This is a very substantial improvement in the quality of life. It's much more economical than driving by car, and a lot more comfortable," agree the Ben Akuns, seated on the evening train back home, browsing one of the free

newspapers.

In fact, the new train line is a major step toward creating urban and transportation contiguity from the Mediterranean Sea to Jerusalem. Modi'in Merkaz (center) is currently the final stop on the line slated in the next few years to span from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"We've linked up with Tel Aviv. You don't need a car. You board the train and in 25 minutes you're in the heart of Tel Aviv," Vaknin says. Modi'in's other train station, "Paatei Modi'in" (Outskirts), opened last September, but it is far from the city centre and has to be reached by car. The result was daily congestion between the city and the station, substituting the traffic jam to Tel Aviv with a local one. The location of the new station allows many residents to walk to the train. Or at least those in good shape.

"Climbing up from the station to Givat Si, the neighborhood we live in, is too tiring," Simcha Ben Akun says. "I don't believe I'll be able to do that in the summer."

Yesterday, many people in Modi'in still seemed oblivious to the long-desired station. The cashier at the train station in Tel Aviv was unaware it existed, and several passengers complained about delays. In the evening the enormous terminal was nearly empty.

Simcha Ben Akun says the train schedule still needs some adjustments. "A lot of people have no choice but to go by car, because the morning trains don't permit them to take their kids to kindergarten. There's a train that leaves around 7 A.M., but I can't make it because then I can't manage to take the kids to kindergarten," he says. "The train after that is around 8 A.M., which is too late - I get to the office in Ramat Gan only at 10 A.M., and that's a problem. They must add a train around 7:30 A.M."

(i). DOUBLING TO NAHARIYYA.

IR continues the work of doubling and upgrading the Kiryat Motzkin - Nahariyya line. In order to minimise disruption to regular passenger traffic, works were to be carried out between 11.05.08 and 29.05.08 only at nights between 22.00 and 04.00. IR published an apology for the inconvenience caused by the works. In connection with the work a tender was issued for acoustic shielding - see below.

(j). STATE COMPTROLLER'S REPORT.

On 21.05.08 the State Comptroller, Judge (retired) Mr. Micha Lindenstrauss unveiled his annual report. Though it was not complimentary about the railways, and criticized the Human Resources Department, mainly for the way it recruited employees, some of them unskilled, as well as promoting others with payments which

exceeded the legal limits, at least the new management headed by General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Harel (Haki), is not involved in this. The response was: "The management has studied the report, will act to correct the failures, and will continue to work in cooperation and transparency with the Comptroller".

The Comptroller's report regarding the Jerusalem LRV project was much more serious due to serious budget excesses.

But only one day later, as it appeared in the press, the Finance Ministry announced that due to the fact that the A1 fast link to Jerusalem project has seriously exceeded the budget's limit, and since the Transport and Roads Safety Ministry wants to promote the line between Akko and Carmiel (Lower Galilee), a decision must be taken soon where to proceed. Since the A1 line has already received heavily investment, one hopes that works will proceed here without any underestimating of the importance of the other line.

(k). MORE ARGUMENTS.

On 31.05.2008 the following appeared in the media (Thanks to Uri Ben-Rehav for the copy):-
HI-SPEED JERUSALEM - TEL AVIV LINE IMPERILLED. By Ezra HaLevi

"The Jerusalem Municipality has intervened in a dispute between the Finance Ministry and Transportation Ministry over the planned high-speed train from Jerusalem to Modi'in, Ben Gurion Airport and Tel Aviv, Globes Business News reported.

The Finance Ministry, deterred by the progress of Jerusalem's light rail and 4 Billion Shekels in budget overruns on the part of Israel Railways, seeks to scrap plans to budget for the construction of the high speed train in the coming years. Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupoliansky met recently with Finance Minister Roni Bar-On to express the Municipality's strong opposition to such a move.

Israel Railways currently will receive no further government funding until it declares which projects it will cancel, or postpone, to bring it within its budget constraints. Another project that may be delayed is the Akko-Carmiel line.

Contractor Threatens Lawsuit. Shapir Marine and Civil Engineering, the infrastructure contractor that will build the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv line, is threatening to sue the government and Israel Railways for the delays in commencing construction on the line. Shapir's controlling shareholder Israel Shapira threatened as much in letters to Minister of Finance Roni Bar-On and Minister of Transport Shaul Mofaz. Shapir, together with Austrian excavation contractor Alpine Group, were joint winners of the massive 1.6 Billion Shekel tender to excavate the tunnels for the high speed train."

(j). ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS.

The campaign which the 'Green' organizations are leading against the railways regarding the damage that the works on the planned tunnels and bridges may cause to the environment, received serious support in a report prepared by Prof. Alfred Hak, an international tunneling specialist from Germany who was until recently the head of STUVA organization.

He claims that instead of two tunnels, one of 11.25 km, the other of 2.5 to 3.0 km, and a bridge over Wadi (gorge) Yitle, one tunnel of 13 km should be bored and this also pass under the bottom of the gorge; he added that, as well as preserving the sensitive environment, this option is both shorter in implementation and cheaper.

It should be mentioned that the plans for the big bridge over the so called Cedars Valley at the entrance to Jerusalem, as well as the 2.5 km entrance tunnel to the new Jerusalem Central railway station (under construction), remain unchanged.

The timing of the Greens' campaign was not incidental; on the same day the District Council for Design and Building was supposed to discuss the environmental effects of the mentioned works; they hoped that the council would support them.

It should be emphasized that the railways have so far rejected the suggested option, claiming that one longer tunnel and a lower alignment are more complex, expensive, and will take longer. However, following a visit along the alignment which took place recently, they say that they will re-check the suggestion on the basis of three criteria: safety, saving money, and keeping to schedule. The results will be shown to professionals and the best option of the two will be implemented.

(m). GANEI AVIV STATION OPENING.

After the actual opening of the new Lod Ganei-Aviv suburban station on Saturday night 10.05.08, the official opening took place on Tuesday 20.05.08, in a modest ceremony with the participation of Transport Minister Mr. Shaul Mofaz, the Railways' General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Harel, and other VIP's.

(n). TRAIN FAILURE ON A BRIDGE.

Although the rail services between Tel-Aviv and Modi'in are generally operating satisfactorily, this was not the case on 19.05.08 when train No. 163 from Nahariyya to Modi'in, which left Ben-Gurion Airport station at 13:51, became stuck on the railway bridge over Highway No.1 (Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem) at a height of 30m for 47 minutes, until a replacement train arrived, thus enabling it to continue towards Modi'in at 15:05; the passengers became frightened, and even changing the train required the

use of ladders as there is no platform on the bridge.

But this incident is one of several cases of suffering from the outdated rolling stock (more than 50 years old) of which this train consisted, and which is subject to endless failures; The reason is simple: delay in delivery of new single-deck push/pull trains from Siemens!

(o). FORMER JERUSALEM LINE TO BECOME A ROAD!

Time for another Kinah, a mournful poem for Tisha B'Av, when we recall the senseless destruction of Jerusalem..... Compared with the cover of issue 79! From 'Jerusalem Post' 02.06.2008 by Ben Sales:

"The Jerusalem Municipality is planning to build a four-lane road in place of the old train tracks no longer in use, according to a spokesperson for the city. Road 34 will run from near the Khan Theater area at the start of the tracks and will extend to Emek Refaim Street. The municipality is seeking funding for the project, which is part of the Jerusalem Building Program, a larger initiative currently underway. The road, according to the spokesperson, will ease traffic around the Emek Refaim area.

The tracks, which have not been in use for several years and are now littered with trash, were built by the Ottomans and upgraded during the British Mandate. Due to the tracks' historical significance, the municipality has met with residents of Katamon and Malha, as well as neighborhood officials. "After confirmation of the [building] plan and acquisition of a financial source, summary and consensus with residents of the neighborhood and its management, we will begin to execute the plan," said the spokesperson. Despite the municipality's efforts to stem protest, the spokesperson said controversy is inevitable at any construction site in Jerusalem."

(p). STRIKE IN THE SOUTH.

In the first week of June, 30 railway employees (with their families) in the Southern Region, stopped train traffic by taking the locos' keys and occupying the southernmost railway station at Nahal Tzin (near the phosphate ores site).

They were protesting against the Railways' management decision to fire some of their colleagues without any justification; they claimed that one of the loco drivers who complained against working too many hours has been treated that way.

The railways' management rejected their claim, explaining that the firings are part of a signed agreement between the former management and the employees' union to reduce manpower by 150 persons, only partly by early retirement; they added that the so called "wild strike" is not supported by the employees' union, nor by the general union; it is therefore not le-

gal, and if necessary would be stopped by force. Meanwhile, the traffic has returned to normal.

(q). LEVEL CROSSING RESURFACING WOES.

On 04.06.08, for 24 hours, the Railways' Engineering Department carried out maintenance work at the level crossing near the eastern entrance to Ben-Gurion Airport and adjacent to road No. 40. Despite early announcements, enormous bottle necks dominated the crossing; (which is in any case congested on a daily basis). Since the level crossing is to be replaced by a grade separation in the near future, the activity included only strengthening the partially-defective Strail Kreiburg rubber plates by tempered asphalt.

(r). I.R. WEB SITE.

Jeremy Topaz writes that there is a new IR web site – www.rail.co.il. "The Hebrew side is very good, with details of projects, gallery of photos, route finder etc. The English side is still very limited".

81:05.

TENDERS.

(i). Tender No. HN/KB/04.08: Frame agreement for carrying out acoustic protection for inhabited apartments along the Kiryat Motzkin - Nahariyya line. Works include: dismantling and installation of windows, sun shades, window bars and doors; dismantling and installation of air-conditioners (including those installed on windows); upgrading the houses' electricity to suit the additional load caused by the additional air-conditioners; preparatory and finishing works and other engineering works. IR intends to select the winning three subcontractors; the contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to an additional 36 months. Bids by 05.06.2008.

(ii). Tender No. H/RC/01/08: An annual frame agreement for current supply of computerized work stations for sites all over the network. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 26.03.08.

(iii). Tender No. CA/SR/13/07: Providing manpower services as per the railways requirement through a frame agreement. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 11.06.08.

(iv) Tenders Nos. MS/RC/2008/24: Providing Taxi services to and from Beit-Yehoshua station; & No. MS/RC2008/25: Providing Taxi services to and from Petakh-Tikva Kiryat-Arie station. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 10.06.08.

(v). Tender No. MC/MT/06/08: Providing consulting and full follow-up services and support and training for the railways' employees in repairing, rebuilding and overhauling motive power and rolling stock diesel engines. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 11.06.08

(vi). Tender No. MC/SR/08/08: A frame agreement for providing international forwarding by air and sea as well as customs agent services. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to an additional 48 months. Latest bidding date: 23.06.08.

(vii). Tender No. BH/SR/07/08: A frame agreement for providing inspection services (watchmen) at level crossings, as well as controlling and inspecting the watchmen, and operating an operational centre for the railways' safety department at the southern region. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 30.06.08.

(viii). Tender No. HN/RC/03/08: Manufacture and supply of steel angles for enforcement and guard rails on bridges. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest bidding date: 25.06.08

81:06.

LIGHT RAIL.

A. TEL AVIV.

(i). BET HA'OSEF REMOVED.

From a press release of 24.03.08 by NTA (Project management):

"NTA has started last week with partial evacuation of the Israeli Defense Army (IDF) museum which is located on part of the historical railway station of Jaffa; the station itself is undergoing massive preservation works, towards becoming a tourist site. During the evacuation, the present entrance to the museum will be demolished, replaced by an alternative one, to give place to an underground LRV station of the Red Line, as part of clearing the alignment of the historical Jaffa and Jerusalem line in favor of the Red Line."

(ii). DEMOLITIONS.

As part of preparatory works for building the Tel-Aviv LRV/METRO first line - the Red Line - some demolishing works must be carried out. Such has been the case with a building of one of Israeli biggest banks - Bank Hapoalim - which was for years on Herzl Street, one of the oldest in the city. The building has not been in use for some years, so after paying compensations, it has been demolished in favour of the project. (Aharon Gazit adds: It is worth

mentioning that nearby the historical railway line between Jaffa and Jerusalem used to run until 1948; rails were taken up to make space for parking area; now the wheel has turned again; it is interesting to consider how much money could had been saved, had the authorities left the rails there!)

(iii). CHANGE OF PLAN?

On 12.05.08 'Yediot Achronot' published an article entitled "The Way to End the Tel Aviv LRV?" "After millions of dollars have been invested in the Tel Aviv LRV-Metro project, the Finance Ministry is considering delaying the project by at least 10 years and using the money instead to build LRV lines on the city's periphery. This would mean cancelling the lines planned between Tel Aviv and its satellite cities, in fact - the end of the Tel Aviv Metro.

According to Finance Minister Roni Bar-On, LRV lines will be built in Beer-Sheva (this project had already been suggested in 1996 by a Dutch consulting company, but later feasibility studies had indicated that it was not needed), and between Haifa and Nazareth and Carmiel (which is surprising, since this has been planned until now as an Israel-Railways heavy-rail line.)

Construction of the first line - the Red Line - between Petah-Tikva and Bat Yam through Tel Aviv will continue according to plan, but the concessionaire MTS, headed by Africa-Israel, will re-check their plans. The Red Line is considered one of the most expensive and complex infrastructure programmes ever carried out in Israel. The State had already started with major infrastructure works, including land expropriation, and preparatory works towards the 3 Billion investment. As already reported, MTS group won the 27-year BOT concession for the Red Line in December 2006.

A member of MTS's Senior Management said: "If what has been said about the Government's intentions are true, then we'll become just a one-line underground system like the Carmelit at Haifa; the main advantage of an LRV system is the ability to change trains. We believe, however, that the government will not renounce its original intentions and commitments." There is no doubt that cancellation would force the Finance Ministry to pay out huge compensation, sums which cannot yet even be forecast, though this may not prevent the Ministry from carrying out this step. A senior manager in NTA (Tel Aviv LRV/Metro) said that "Any delay in the LRV construction will lead to cancellation of the project; the Red Line will also face a delay."

The main discussion between the Finance Ministry and the Tel Aviv Municipality concerns the underground section of the planned second line - the Green Line - which is to pass under Ibn Gabirol Street (one of the most important in the city); in the original MTS plan there were stations to be used by both lines - such as Carlebach-

Hashmonaim station; the intention was to reduce costs and permit inter-operation with the concessionaire of the Green Line (when this was selected); now the planned costs will rise, and MTS may thus appeal to the Supreme Court. MTS has responded that this station is the only one where, so far, any interchange between the lines had been planned. The Finance Ministry's response was that the 2009 budget was being prepared and, as usual, several alternatives were being checked.

The Tel Aviv Municipality announced: "We welcome every plan to develop the periphery; however, we believe that plans that have been crystallised for years and have been proved to be relevant and efficient for the development of Israel should be carried out as intended and not 'torpedoed' by the Finance Ministry. The only way to reduce the gaps between the centre of Israel and its periphery is to create an efficient public transport system, which can make all the cultural, employment, and economic centres accessible to the whole population, and in terms of the Israeli distances, it is most important for the growth of the economy, as well as for the society, environment and quality of life." Mr. Eithan Atiya, the General Manager of the Forum of the 15 Big Cities said "Cancelling the project in the Greater Tel Aviv area is a short-sighted planning vision of the Finance Ministry; one third of the Israeli population pass there daily; a metro system will improve their access to work, reduce delays in bottlenecks and dramatically decrease air pollution. Improving public transport systems is a national target, and the Ministry should look at the next decade, not the next week, just two days after the State's 60th. anniversary."

The conclusion is that there is a struggle under way between the Ministry and the Mayor of Tel Aviv, Mr. Ron Huldai, who insists on the underground section. The cost of this underground section is \$435M, of which the municipality is prepared to finance a quarter; the Ministry is ready to finance one additional third for tunnelling under four main junctions to compensate for the loss of the third lane by the LRV; so, for only \$145 Million, the Ministry is ready to take half a million car drivers in addition to 1.2M people entering the city daily as hostages, and despite high compensation to be paid to the companies which already invested in the project, the Ministry appears ready to cancel it all." (Some of the bracketed comments are by Aharon Gazit.)

B. JERUSALEM.

(i). CRACKING UP

Cracks were discovered Monday 31.03.2008 in the base of the Bridge of Strings, at the entrance to Jerusalem. Army Radio reported faults in the welding of sev-

eral of the iron bars which would likely lead to delays in the project and an increase in its cost.

The construction of the grandiose new bridge is part of the city's long-planned



light rail system. The state-of-the-art structure is being built at the central junction connecting Jaffa Road and Sderot Herzl at the entrance to the city. The bridge, designed by the renowned Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, is being built on concrete supports covered in Jerusalem stone, with the steel-and-glass structure hanging above it. Along the track of the bridge - which will connect the light rail's first city route from Jaffa Road to Sderot Herzl in both directions - a pedestrian walkway will offer visitors and commuters a panoramic view of the city. The annual report at the end of 2007 by Jerusalem Comptroller Shlomit Rubin revealed that construction of the bridge was already costing more than three times its original budget, while the building project was running about four years behind schedule.

(ii). GOING OFF THE RAILS IN JERUSALEM.

By Jonathan Lis. From 'Ha'aretz' 17.04.2008.

"Jerusalem municipal engineer Shlomo Eshkol, yesterday excoriated authorities tasked with constructing the city's light rail, calling the project a "failure."

Eshkol, an architect, said that delays in the construction of the railway have seriously damaged residents' quality of life and that some flaws in the infrastructure may endanger the lives of its future passengers.

"My first day on the job I walked along the tracks and saw so many cracks in the concrete that I thought, 'This train is going to jump the track in a minute,'" Eshkol told an audience at the Hebrew University. "This should not have happened to the French company, Astrom, which has a tremendous amount of experience. It certainly isn't the fault of whoever designed it."

Eshkol was speaking at a conference on Israeli public space from 1948-

2008. The rail project is currently set to open in September 2010, more than a year behind schedule. Its construction has shut down a number of major arteries in the city, seriously increasing congestion on the streets. "Jaffa Street is

open to traffic only once in three years, and that is a failure. It isn't enough to make plans nor is it enough to have good intentions," Eshkol said.

Because of the delay in construction the much-heralded and highly visible Chords Bridge designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava at the city entrance will be completed before the tracks and remain unused.

"The Calatrava bridge - if it doesn't collapse - what good will it be? No trains will be using it," Eshkol said. "Look, we're in the dumps. We created a plan, just like other places in Israel, whose aim was to strengthen public transport. The plan was good, it was just fine. But its execution was botched."

City council opposition head Nir Bareket blamed the municipality and the contractor for the delays and said there were flaws in the construction. "Jerusalem's residents have realized that the managerial errors concerning the railway, and the superfluous bridge, have cost the public a lot of money, and are not beneficial to the city," he said. He rebuked Mayor Uri Lupolianski for refusing to recognize the alleged failings. "Statements made at the conference do not represent the picture as it was presented to the public at the conference, and were selected by a member of the opposition for political gain," municipal spokesman Gigi Schmerling said.

"The city engineer said that in the past there were difficulties in the contractors work, but since the municipality's intervention the track laying has been in full swing. What he said about the Calatrava bridge [collapsing] was obviously made in jest," Schmerling said.

About 8 kilometers of track, or half the total, have been laid, and the control center and train depot is under construction at the La Rochelle factories in France, Schmerling said. Over 30 of the planned 46 carriages have been built, and after some partial cracks were found and repaired on a small stretch of track no other flaws have been spotted, Schmerling said.

Jerusalem's mass transit project includes eight lines. The state's estimate for the cost of the first light railway line, totaling 13.8 km and running from Pisgat Ze'ev through Jaffa Road and Mount Herzl, was NIS 1.9 Billion including a grant by the state of NIS 1.4 Billion. The route will be extended at a second stage to Neve Yaakov in the

north and Hadassah Hospital Ein Kerem in the south. The railway is a "Build/Operate/Transfer" (BOT) project in which the franchisee constructs the line and operates it, charging users a fee, for 30 years."

(iii). TRACKLAYING.

From a press release of 11.03.08 by Jerusalem Moriya, City-Pass, and the LRV project management:

"The track laying works on the first LRV line - The Red Line - continue along 8 km out of the total length of 14 km; extensions are further planned to Neve-Yaakov in the north of Jerusalem, and to Hadassa-Ein-Kerem hospital in the south. Recently the final paving of tracks has been completed along Herzl Boulevard between Mount Herzl and Sha'arei-Tzedek junction, while another section between Hekhalutz junction and Pick junction will shortly be completed.

Simultaneously, the production of the Citadis LRV cars continues at Alstom La-Rochelle works in France; 30 out of 46 ordered cars are completed; the first cars, which arrived half a year ago, are stored at the IAI-RAMTA double-deck train assembly hall at Beer-Sheva (which at present has no work); the delivery of the rest of the cars will start in April 2008.

The works on the famous Calatrava bridge at the entrance to the city are continuing satisfactorily; after the 118 m high mast was erected more than a month ago; the bridge builders have managed to tension 33 strings (cables) out of the 66 intended to hold the 4,300 ton bridge; it is planned to complete the whole bridge in May 2008, when a ceremony will take place with the participation of the designer Santiago Calatrava.

But the LRV project is only part - though with core importance - of the Jerusalem's new public transport master plan, which includes re-deployment of many buses lines - including some BRT special lanes which started already on 24.02.08; in the next stage, bus lines passing at the main street - Jaffa Street - will be relocated to the nearby streets to enable City-Pass to start track laying on Jaffa Street; buses will not pass there any more, as this will become a Pedestrian +LRV area only. All those involved are hopeful that, although some bus lines may look longer, public transport users will eventually save time due to the faster speed of the LRV combined with improved and coordinated bus services.

The 50 ton sculpture called Kalder (named after the sculptor who made it) has been moved on 12.03.08 from its temporary location near Sha'arei-Tzedek hospital to its original location at Mount Herzl, on a newly-built square near a big LRV station being built there, and above a new underground Kiss-and-Ride parking area which



will offer 530 places; the sculpture itself which consists of 6 steel arches, images the mountainous scenery around Jerusalem.

(iv). TRAMS ARRIVING!

On 07.05.2008 the first LRV train arrived at the depot at French Hill in North Jerusalem. Another train is currently stored at the hangar at RAMTA's plant in Beer-Sheva, where Bombardier IC3 dmu's and double-deck push-pull trains were assembled in the past.

(v). THREATENED STOP

On 31.05.2008 the following appeared:-

"The Jerusalem light rail project is in danger after the construction inside Jerusalem continues to surpass budget and time benchmarks. The Knesset Finance Committee approved the budgeting of an additional 150 Million Shekels toward the Jerusalem light rail earlier this week, due to delays in the project. An additional 30 Million Shekels were approved for ongoing work costs. The additional allotment brings the cost of the project to 3.3 Billion Shekels so far. The winner of the tender to construct the light rail, CityPass, will absorb the rest of the 287 Million Shekel cost of the delays.

The Jerusalem light rail project is running 18 months behind schedule currently. Government delays in expropriating land, assigning staff from the Antiquities Authority to perform the requisite inspections of earth excavated and general foot-dragging by Jerusalem city engineers have



81:07.

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. IRAN.

From 'C.R.J.' 13, Spring 2008, p. 301: "The firm of Keller (Italy) has been awarded two contracts to supply rolling stock to Iran. The first is for 15 six-coach diesel trainsets for use on the Teheran - Qom line. Six will be built in Italy and nine in Iran, by Wagon Sazi Kowazar. The second contract is for 186 Couchette and 36 Restaurant vehicles, with 76% of manufacture in Italy and 24% in Iran."

Interestingly, the entry on Cuba (p. 318) notes: "Venezuela is helping the Cuban State Railways to the extent of US\$100M, which will be spent firstly on track rehabilitation. New freight wagons are being delivered from Iranian builder Wagon Pars...."

B. IRAN-IRAQ.

Also from 'Fahrplancenter News' May 2008 p.11: "The new international railway line will be ready earlier than originally planned. Iranian firms had been commissioned to build the 50km. long international stretch between Basra and Khorramshahr. Although the works only began at the end of 2006, the 15km. section from Khorramshahr to the border station of Shalamchah was already almost complete by September 2007. The 35km. section from the border to Basra was at that point so advanced that from October it was possible to start tracklaying and the opening was planned for the Iranian New Year on 21st. March 2008."

C. ERITREA.

From 'C.R.J.' 13, Spring 2008, p. 306: "On their visit in November 2007, the Railway Touring Company party were expecting to use the usual three Ansaldo-built Mallets and one of the little Breda-built 0-4-0T's for their trains. However, on arrival at Asmara they were given the surprising news that the one surviving old-series Mallet 0-4-4-0T, 440.008 (Ansaldo 1162/1915), which had not been used since the Ethiopians closed the railway in 1976, was to be steamed for them. On 6th. November the locomotive performed some shunting at Asmara yard and then, hauling one coach and one bogie box van, took the group up to the summit loop at km. 115 and back. The loco was leaking much steam, and it seems more work will have to be undertaken on it, before it can be relied upon to venture down the line. However, it is a highly-commendable effort by the staff to restore it to service. During the one week visit, Mallet 0-4-4-0T's 442.54 & 59 were also used in various combinations, and the Fiat 'Littorina' railcar ran from Asmara to Nefasit and back on 5th. November.

At Mai Atal, the rusty derelict shell of 4wDE TIBB 4067/1935, which had stood in the sand away from the railway for years, has now been replaced on the rails in a siding. Our reporter also heard talk of the re-introduction of a local passenger service at Massawa, using one of the Drewry 0-6-0DM locos, and of the introduction of container trains from Massawa. As regards the latter, two bogie frames to carry containers were under construction in the works at Asmara. There also seems to be some effort to attract tourist traffic, and on most Sundays

there is now a public excursion train, Mallet-hauled, from Asmara to Arboroba and back. On 6th. November a large party of German medical people hired 442.59 and train to take them down to Nefasit and back, an experience they seemed to thoroughly enjoy."

D. JORDAN.

'Fahrplancenter News' is an occasional publication in German, produced by Samuel Rachdi in Switzerland, which manages to collate vast amounts of information on some of the most obscure railway systems on earth. The latest issue (No. 43, May 2008) has on p.10 an article 'Adieu Hejazbahn' which seems to confirm that the days of the ancient Ottoman relic which, with no real economic or other function left apart from the occasional pleasuring of necrophiliac enthusiasts, still occupies a part of Amman, are indeed numbered. It is true that we have reported earlier on such schemes, and there is an old German proverb to the effect that those who have been written off as dead usually live longer.... but nevertheless:-

"Within the framework of the World Economic Forum, the government of the Kingdom of Jordan has signed contracts with several local and foreign consortia for infrastructure works with a total value of US\$ 2.5 Billion. Within these measures are included construction of the electric urban railway between Amman and Zarqa. This railway will cost between 160 and 180 Million Jordanian Dinars - (about US\$ 228 - \$256 M.)

The project for an electric urban or suburban railway between Amman, the largest city and the capital of the country, and Zarqa, the third-largest city and most important industrial centre of Jordan, has already been thought about for several years, since the roads remain unable to cope with the traffic despite successive expansion measures. Between them these two cities account for 52% of the country's population and over 70% of all employment and over 80% of all Colleges and Universities. The travel time for the ca. 25km. between the two cities by bus is currently over an hour.

What is currently envisaged is a form of Light Rail Transit, similar to an Interurban or a Cross-Country Tramway. The line should go from the current Amman main station at Al Mahatta over the 26km. to Zarqa, using the trackbed of the current Hedjaz Railway. Instead of the current gauge of 1050mm a new double-track electrified line of 1435mm (standard) gauge will be used. The line will also extend some 3km. from the Al Mahatta station further to the district of Raghadan, and the Government has already purchased the necessary land for this in May and June 2007.

Construction - says the article

- was due to begin in the second half of 2007. Main contractor will be the Infrastructure Development Company Ltd. (IDC) - this is a consortium comprising Jordanian, Pakistani and Chinese firms. The Jordanian firms are mainly responsible for the civil works; there will be some road bridges and a total of four railway stations; the entire line will be protected with walls in order to hinder illegal crossing of the tracks. However, rails will be laid of a type that can also be used for a 'heavy rail' line, for at some non-specified future time this line should become a part of the standard-gauge Damascus - Amman line. During 2009 the new suburban railway should be brought into use over the entire 29km.

The top speed of the trains - which will be formed from a total fleet of 28 vehicles - will be 90 km/h and the entire travel time will be 38 or 39 minutes; initially 78 trains will work daily (39 in each direction), and it is estimated that there will be 45,000 passengers per direction per day. The standard full single fare will be between 0.47 and 0.50 Dinars (ca. US 0.75); at present the bus fare is 0.25 Dinars, but is due to be raised to between 0.45 and 0.50.

In a second stage the line should be extended from the bus station at Raghadan to the Ras Al Ain area, and in a third stage a branch would be built to the 'Queen Alia' International Airport - making a total system of some 47 km.

In 2007 Jordan's Railway system comprised:-

621 km. of 105cm. gauge.

- Of this, 217 km. is 'Hejaz Jordan Railway' (HJR) in operation for passenger and freight traffic (though this was suspended in the second half of the year.) There has been on average one train per day run on the HJR, including Charter trains.

In 2005 a total of 4,070 passengers, of which 3,100 in national and the rest international.

In 2005 a total of 1,600 tons of freight, of which 700 tons inland, 900 tons international.

- 111km. of the HJR are either not operational or used only for Charter traffic. To some extent the tracks are used for storage of unserviceable wagons.

- 293km. is Aqaba Railway (ARC), only freight traffic, 4 to 6 trains per day, on average, in both directions. Traffic in 2005: 2.65 Million tons.

What will become of the 'Rest' of the HJR?

Jordan has given up on the hope for a reconstruction of the original Hejaz Railway from Damascus in Syria to Medina in Saudi Arabia. This is in fact a largely realistic viewpoint, for Syria has also been planning for some years to regauge the line from Damascus to Dera'a (the Jordanian border) to standard gauge and over a new, somewhat

shorter alignment - albeit without until now undertaking any concrete steps in this direction. Indeed, at the moment the Syrian narrow-gauge diesel locos are actually being overhauled back in Romania! In Saudi Arabia several new lines are envisaged, all in standard gauge, whereby some sections of the former Hejaz Railway alignment may be employed for the new lines.

In Jordan itself things will also change; Not only the reconstruction of the double-track standard-gauge line Amman - Zarqa, but also the total rebuilding of the Aqaba Railway. At present Aqaba Railway Corporation runs from the phosphate mine at El Abiad (36 km. south of Qatranah, currently the end of the state-owned HJR) via Ma'an and Batn-el-Ghoul to the port of Aqaba. South of El Abiad another phosphate mine in Hassa is served, also to the east of the old mine line. Both these phosphate mines will suspend their operations in 2008, since their reserves are exhausted.

From Ma'an to Naqqab (west of M'an) is - or was - a further narrow gauge line, currently disused but apparently still with most of its rails. From Batn-el-Ghoul the former old HR main line went on southwards to the border station at Mudawara, but here it is without any tracks.

At the end of 2008 the ARC will be granted a new concession, together with a new mine at El-Shidiya, north-east of Batn-el-Ghoul. The new organisation will be required to build the new railway line Batn-el-Ghoul - El Shidiya, as well as the short branch Aqaba - Wadi Il (very close to the border with Saudi Arabia). In Wadi Il an industrial complex will be built, in which the raw materials of Phosphate, Phosphoric Acid and Sulphur - approximately 10 Million tons a year, from El-Shidiya - will be half-processed. The Aqaba Railway - even including the new sections - will be only some 50% as long as it is now. The new branches will be built to standard-gauge clearances, though at first they will be laid with 105 cm. tracks (taken from the line north of Ma'an). Between 2012 and 2015 the entire Aqaba Railway should then be converted to standard gauge.

In this period the Jordanian Government plans also to convert the Zarqa - Mafraq section of the northern part of the HJR to standard gauge, since in this period construction from Mafraq to Irbid and into the Jordan Valley is also envisaged. This line should then later be extended to Haifa in Israel. As soon as the line has been rebuilt in Syria, Jordan will also rebuild the section Mafraq - Dera'a. The section Amman - Batn-el-Ghoul would be rebuilt and widened - if at all - much later, and then only in connection with a co-ordinated project for the entire Near East together with a direct route from Baghdad to the harbour at Aqaba or for the planned Freight Corridor Turkey - Syria - Jordan - Saudi Arabia. At this point a

new goods-only line would be built, to the east of the current alignment.

What will be left of the old Hejaz Railway?

Consideration is currently being given by HJR to the retention of the old station building - or at least a part of it - for use with the new railway, but as yet nothing has been decided. According to information received from the HJR management, the charter steam trains will travel from Amman only as far as Qatrana, for as long as there is still room for narrow-gauge tracks in the Amman station area. It is not planned to transfer the steam locos to Mafraq. It remains unclear whether the direct Damascus - Amman train will later be worked from/to Mafraq. Since the traffic at the intermediate stations in Jordan is so minimal, this section has been withdrawn again a few months ago. No-one can say when the Charter trains with steam locos which work southwards will end; at any event, it is intended to retain some of the steam locomotives and create a railway museum somewhere near the Amman main station."

E. HEDJAZ TOUR.

In view of the news elsewhere in this issue, who knows how long such tours can continue to be held? Globotrain of Bern, Switzerland, are running one 27.08.2008 - 10.09.2008, led by Walter Finkbohner. From the German-language brochure (also available on-line):-

"On 1st. September 1908 the official opening of the 1302km. line from Damascus to Medina took place..... In 1913 the railway had 96 steam locomotives, 103 passenger coaches and 1028 goods wagons. Trains ran three times a week from Damascus to Medina and daily from Damascus to Haifa.... Today there is still traffic between Damascus and Amman, and other sections of route are also still passable. With our steam special trains we shall experience the Hedjaz Railway as it was, with locomotives almost 100 years old and carriages from the time of the opening. Not on upholstery but in original compartments with wooden seats! Pure railway romance. The landscapes of Syria and Jordan offer a wonderful background for a steam trip through the Orient. There will be many photo stops to allow for the best photography and filming opportunities along the way.

Day 1. Travel to Aleppo. Fly Zürich-Aleppo via Amman, transfer to hotel, overnight in Aleppo.

Day 2. Aleppo. Visit the city with the large Omayyad mosque, the Citadel, a Koran school, the Caravanserai, a walk through the Old City and a visit to the 12-kilometre long Bazaar.

Day 3. Aleppo - Damascus. Train trip from the Bagdadbahn station in

Aleppo, built 1905, with the Syrian State Railways to Damascus. Arrival around midday. Damascus' Old City is a UNESCO special site. Afternoon - first trip with the steam train from Damascus El Hameh to Ein Al Fiejeh. Return by bus to Damascus.

Day 4. Damascus. Discover Damascus with the Omayyad Mosque, the grave of Saladin, the Hanania Chapel, the old Hedjaz Station, the famous Bazaar 'Suq Al-Hamediya' and the National Museum.

Day 5. Damascus - Bosra. Extensive tour of the Cadem station; the repair workshops of the Syrian Hedjaz Railway with an unbelievable collection of stored locomotives, old but still functioning machines, and spare parts - and a small museum. One of the most interesting workshops of the Middle East. Then a day trip with the steam train from Damascus to Bosra. The terminus of this branch lies directly below the Roman Theatre and allows a wonderful background for all photographers. Visit the city of Bosra with its Theatre.

Day 6. Bosra - Amman. In the morning we have further good photo opportunities with the steam train in Bosra and its wonderful landscape. Then steam train via Deraa to Zarqa. Short transfer to Amman, overnight in Amman.

Day 7. Amman. Today we explore the surroundings of Amman. We visit Jerash, after Petra the most interesting ruined city in Jordan. This ancient city had a remarkably long chain of settlements and was one of the Decapolis, a dynamic economic union of ten Graeco-Roman provincial Cities. A visit to Mount Nebo should also not be missed, where the location of the death and burial of Moses is assumed to lie. There is a breathtaking view over the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.

Day 8. Amman - Karak - Amman. Before we board our steam train, we visit the small museum of the Hedjaz Railway in Amman station. Then we travel through the desert to Al Qatrana. We continue by bus to Karak, where the ruins of the imposing fortress may be seen. We return via the King's Road back to Amman.

Day 9. Amman - Petra. Short return by bus to Al Qatrana. A further breathtaking steam trip through the desert to Ma'an with many wonderful subjects for photography. From Ma'an an accompa-

nying bus brings us to Petra, where we overnight.

Day 10. Petra. This day is wholly available for visiting the ancient Nabataean city; Known as the rose-red city, it is a UNESCO World Culture site and in 2007 was given second place as one of the seven New Wonders of the World. The spectacular location deep inside a narrow desert ravine can be experienced soon after the entrance - we walk through the Canyon, also known as the 'Siq', with 80-metre high rock walls. Petra's most famous monument, the Treasury, appears dramatically at the end of the Siq. This is however only the first of Petra's secrets.

Day 11. Petra. In the morning a second visit to Petra with free time. The many pathways and staircases lead to literally hundreds of tombs and temple facades carved into the rock. In the afternoon we visit the less-well-known but just as fascinating 'Little Petra'.

Day 12. Petra - Wadi Rum. Travel to Ma'an to the Hedjaz Railway. Our steam train takes a large curve from Ma'an through the impressive desert landscape until Wadi Rum. Punctually for sunset we take a Jeep tour in the Wadi Rum and can then observe the breathtaking display of stars from our tented camp.

Day 13. Wadi Rum - Aqaba. Early risers have the opportunity to see the sunrise on the wonderful cliff and desert landscape around Wadi Rum. Breakfast in the open air, then a bus to Aqaba, which with Israel and Egypt forms practically a three-country corner at the end of the Red Sea. In the afternoon an opportunity to enjoy the sun on the beach and to bathe.

Day 14. Aqaba. Boat excursion to Pharon Island in Egypt (no visa necessary). Here we can bathe or snorkel as we wish. In the afternoon, return to Aqaba.

Day 15. Return journey. Very early morning we drive from Aqaba to Amman Airport and fly back to Switzerland."

The price is given as 5980 Swiss Francs, including everything except insurance, tips, drinks etc. Swiss citizens (at whom the advert is mainly directed) require a valid passport with no Israeli stamps. This is clearly a leisurely tour aimed at the luxury end of the market and, in comparison with such as TEFS tours of the past, fits in a lot more general tourism and a lot less rail travel. The tour guide is a former SBB-CFF employee with much experience of running special trains.

More details from Globotrain, Neuengasse 30, 3001 Bern, Switzerland. 031-313-0003. www.globotrain.ch & info@globotrain.ch.

F. LIBYA.

From 'Fahrplancenter News' May 2008, p. 26. "Repeated irregularities and corruption affairs led to a stop in construction of the line from Tripolis to Ras Edjer and Misratah in 2007 - the works were in any case already running 3 to 4 years late. In 2009 the first locomotives are due to be delivered! In mid-2008 construction works were resumed, once more with Chinese firms. The earliest possible opening date is now given as 2012."

continued at foot of next page

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). YESODOT STATION - A LOOP MYSTERY CLEARED.

(See 50:5:(e).) By Sybil Ehrlich.
Oh, how Paul would have adored this one...

I have just received from Jacob Ma'ayan a real live 1956 map, scale 1:100 000, which is an old British map in English with overprinting in Hebrew - all the new settlements to that date. The sheet is called Ramle and covers Beit Shemesh. Here is what I wrote to Jacob:

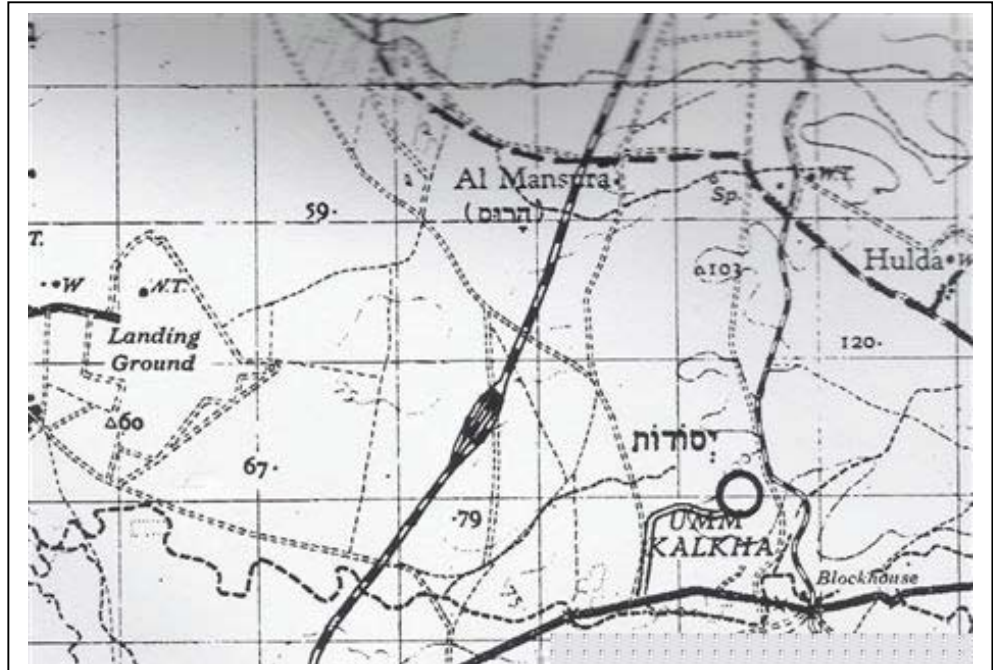
"The most interesting thing I have found (so far, and I have had the map only two hours!) is on the railway line to Beersheba. This line was opened only in 1956 so it was very new when the map was printed. You can see that it has been added - the line is thicker than the railway to Jerusalem.

In the centre of the extract attached (1956 map), just west of Yesodot, there is a passing loop (a place where two trains pass on single track).

It isn't usual to mark these on maps of 1:100,000 scale, or even larger than that. The passing loops at Na'an, Nahal Sorek (Wadi Surar) and Beit Shemesh are not shown on this map, and I wouldn't expect them to be.

I have seen several maps showing a station there (see extract of 1961 map* attached). I have always been puzzled by this, as there has never been an actual station at that place. So this seems to be the answer! Someone saw this 1956 map and assumed it was a station, and the mistake was perpetuated!

*The 1961 map is from a little book called Israel: Pocket Atlas & Handbook, which is quite funny."



G. LIBYA.

In 'Lok Magazin' June 2008 p. 31 Thomas Meyer-Eppler gives a little more information:- "After the bankruptcy of the German firm Walter-Bau, the China Railway Construction Corporation has received the contract to build two railway lines in Libya. The first will be 352 km. long and runs parallel to the Mediterranean coast from Surt to Misratah and Al Khums. 55 bridges need to be built and 26 stations. This project should be complete by 2012. At the same time an 810-km. long north-south line from Misratah to Sabha is to be tackled; this should be easier to construct and should therefore be ready for operation in 2011. The entire contract is worth \$US 2 Billion."

H. TURKEY.

There has been some correspondence about surviving TCDD steam locos on the chat-line. Here is the latest:- "In my understanding, 56548 was repaired by a private sub-contractor on behalf of TCDD who is still the owner of this loco. TCDD also heated up 56009 several times lately and this loco was seen in various places around the country in the past year. Although both locos can run under their own power, it seems that they are not sufficiently reliable and powerful enough to haul a train on the main line on their own."

I. KUWAIT.

This entry is, admittedly, a bit of a cheat, but.... In the DB magazine 'Mobil', given out free on trains, issue 06/08 p.49, is a brief item on the "Rail&Fly" offer whereby certain airlines offer cheap connecting train tickets to airports, and some of these are now also sponsoring advertising on locomotives. A DB Class 101 electric express passenger loco is now emblazoned with 'Kuwait Airways' insignia and symbols!

(b). INTERNATIONAL PARK.

Building on the idea of a National Park is a scheme to create an International Park at Naharayim, on the Jordan River, in both Israel and Jordan. An article in the 'Juedische Allgemeine' newspaper 22.05.2008 p. 5 refers to the scheme which would mean reactivating the site of the former Naharyim power station, rebuilding some dams to raise river levels, and "possibly in the future a little train will once more cross the bridge at Gesher taking holidaymakers from one side to the other". Since Kibbutz Gescher already has a short 60cm. gauge line (as well as the short section of 105cm. HR track with the wagons on the bridge), maybe an extension of this is intended?

(c). NEW MUSEUM FOR RAKEVET HA'EMEK (THE VALLEY LINE):

Received as a press release from Israel:- "On June 6th 2008 the new visitor center of The Hedjaz Railway Museum at the historic Rakevet HaEmek station adjacent to Kfar-Yehoshua will open to the public.

The Hedjaz Railway was constructed in the Middle East at the begin-

ning of the 20th century to create railway transportation for the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire in order to make the difficult journey of the Hajj (Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, in modern days Saudi Arabia) easier. A small section of the railway system was intended to connect the entire system to the Mediterranean Sea via Izrael Valley (Emek Izrael). During the first half of the 20th century Rakevet HaEmek thrived rapidly and took a significant part in the success of many Zionist settlements in the northern part of Eretz Israel. Following the Israeli War of Independence the international railway links were shut down and Rakevet HaEmek ceased to operate. After many years of neglect most of the railway was taken apart and the formerly grand and luxurious stations crumbled.

Rakevet HaEmek is one of the most fondly-remembered means of transportation that no longer exist. The Hedjaz Railway Museum was established in the historic Rakevet HaEmek station to commemorate its legacy. Some of the old buildings of the Kfar-Yehoshua station were reconstructed for the purpose of opening the museum for visitors. The Rakevet HaEmek Museum is not only a form of nostalgia - It is intended to become an active heritage center for the people of Kfar-Yehoshua and the Jezreel Valley in general. The visitor center will attract an even greater crowd, consisting of tourists, Israeli and foreigners.

The new visitor center of The Rakevet HaEmek Museum will open on June 6th 2008, during the "Milk and Honey Festival" of the municipality of Emek Izrael. Several distinguished guests will take part in the ceremonial opening of center - Minister of Environmental Protection Gideon Ezra, Deputy Defence Minister Matan Vilnai and Turkish ambassador to Israel Namik Tan. Except for the opening ceremony, the guests will be invited to take a tour in the new visitor center and to participate in an academic review of the history of Rakevet HaEmek, which will be detailed by Dr. Mordechai Naor and Dr. Ory Gordon. The museum is under the supervision of the society for Preservation of Israel Heritage Sites, and the manager of the museum is the vigorous Tami Bar-Yosef. Bar-Yosef is a strong supporter of railroad-enthusiasts and she is planning much more for the development of the museum."

We wish the museum well!

On 12.06.2008 Sybil Ehrlich wrote:-

Last Friday (June 6) the Rakevet Ha'emek Visitors' Centre in the old station at Kfar Yehoshua was opened. Plenty of boring speeches, and even a singer (!), but afterwards everyone went into the station building to see what turned out to be a very nicely done museum.

It could have been frightfully kitschy, with cardboard cutouts of things

that bear no resemblance to what actually ran on Rakevet Ha'emek ("who cares, it's a steam loco, isn't it? What's the difference?") so I was very pleased to see that it was all extremely authentic. Lots of old photos and items, some from the Railway Museum, some of which I'd previously seen, obviously. There is also a short film, partly computerised - original photos from Rakevet Ha'emek with "moving parts" that looked really good. Also a small model railway with a moving train that goes all round the museum and back, with signals etc. The loco is the right kind but it needs to be painted with HR, and the signals also need to be fixed so they are authentic - they are European style. David Pe'er, the builder of the model, is working on this. It's (I think) HO gauge, smaller scale than my model of Beit Shemesh station. Among the credits in this little museum are the names of Chen Melling and Meir Shapira - Meir must be the greatest living authority on Rakevet Ha'emek; I don't know whether he's into technicalities of locos etc., but show him a stone or a fence post and he can tell you exactly where it's from!

Amith Ben-Shalom's verdict: "Paul would have liked it." I agree.

(d). BOOK REVIEW:- THE ISRAEL-ARAB READER,

Seventh Revised and Updated Edition.

Barry Rubin and Walter Laqueur, "The Israel-Arab Reader", (Penguin Group, 2008). 640 pages. \$12.06. ISBN-13: 978-01431-1379-9. In print for 40 years, this book is a thorough and up-to-date guide to the continuing crisis in the Middle East. It provides almost 300 primary texts covering more than a century of history. It documents the British mandate and early attempts to handle the conflict; Israel's independence and the outbreak of wars; international diplomatic efforts to make peace including the 1990s' peace process and its breakdown. Materials are presented reflecting the positions of Arab leaders and states, Europeans, Israel, Palestinians, the USSR, and the United States. The texts of international resolutions and agreements, as well as accords made during the peace process, are also provided. Almost 50,000 copies of previous editions are in print, making this one of the most widely used reference books on the Middle East."

This review appeared in 'The Middle East Review of International Affairs'. We would echo it wholeheartedly. On the whole 'Harakevet' tries to steer a neutral course and avoid specifically political statements, but this is only possible if one has at least a basic outline knowledge of the period and the region concerned. It is remarkable how deep the ignorance of so many commentators is, and this is indeed one reason why 'Harakevet' continues - in an attempt to ensure that in at least one

small niche area, that involving Railways and Transport, Facts are presented and not just polemical Fantasy. Anyone concerned to acquire this basic overview is encouraged to acquire this book.

(e). THE NEXT D.G.E.G. ISRAEL RAILWAYS TOUR!!!

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eisenbahngeschichte - German Society for Railway History - will be running another tour of Israel Railways, November 1st. - 8th. 2008. The plan is to stay in an hotel in Tel Aviv and from there cover all routes with passenger traffic - and in addition ride the 'Carmelit' in Haifa, visit the workshops in Qishon and Dimona, the Railway Museum in Haifa, the old trackbed by Rosh Haniqra, the old diesel locos standing at Kfar Sava, and Lod, the old Esslingen railcar in Jerusalem, the tramway construction works, all this latter employing bus travel to get to interesting spots for photography.

More details can be obtained from the DGEG at < reisen@dgeg.de > or Tomas Meyer-Eppler, at < tomas@meyer-eppler.de >

81:09.

EGYPT - OBSERVATIONS AND TRIP REPORT; JULY 2007.

By Simon Mortimer (This was posted on World-Rail-Gen@yahoo.com on 15.07.2007; noted thanks to Henry Posner III.)

General Points.

In general rail travel in Egypt is not particularly difficult, nor are there any sections of the network from which foreigners are forbidden to go. However there are some particular conditions to consider; Timetables and related information are shown at main stations (and at smaller ones not at all) in ARABIC and no other language, nor is it available on the internet (with the exception of a few overnight sleeper trains clearly aimed at foreigners) and do not expect local railway men to steer you right as they will speak no or practically no English. The tourist information places do naturally have people speaking English but will almost invariably advise you to take a "Superjet" air conditioned bus wherever you want to go and be clueless about much else! Consequently anybody intent on much of a trip must arm themselves with what is I believe the ONLY translation of the ENR timetable into English from www.hassounmedia.co.uk which is based on the July 2004 timetable; further to gain much of an insight into past

and current operations the book *Steel in the Sand* by Gary Goldfinch from the same source is again singularly pivotal, and I am not on commission! All references to past and current practice as well as historical notes below are benchmarked against these publications. My experience is that to date with some notable exceptions all addressed below the timetables still hold pretty much to those translated in 2004.

Ticketing does not present an issue as, so long as you can find your train, you can always buy on the train, and particularly in 3rd class the fares are practically nothing by western standards; even in the air-con classes they rarely exceed a few pounds (UK) even for very long runs, the sleeper services up the Nile and to Mersa Matruh in summer need prebooking (although trying to do this from UK by fax, e-mail or phone is all practically impossible) and must be paid for in US dollars, or Euros, not Egyptian pounds! A single cabin from Mersa Matruh to Cairo, offering a western standard compartment covering some 500km and evening meal/breakfast costs \$72 which is still remarkably good value!

However if you have the chance to buy tickets from ticket offices, and can actually convince the clerk as to where you want to go, you should be rewarded by Edmonson style tickets often in Arabic and English!

Photography is technically illegal and subject to fines, and confiscation as all public utilities are considered military installations! However a little common sense and indeed craftiness about where and when you take photos usually means there is no problem, although be prepared for the odd officious railway policeman or railway employee who will emerge from nowhere bellowing "no photo, no photo"; conversely I have been given cab rides and taken photos quite openly even of crews themselves at their insistence! It all really boils down to where you are and who's around.

Whilst on this subject, more generally there are two Egypts, "tourist Egypt" inside which you are expected to spend money on whatever facilities or goods are provided and outside this bubble where you are probably the only westerner ever seen, certainly the subject of curiosity, "where you go" is the standard question and where you can even be regarded with deep suspicion.

To put ENR into context, it is certainly the most complex and densely trafficked system in Africa; services are generally quite frequent depending on context and run with the exceptions below on a

daily almost unchanging basis; similarly trafficked systems in north Africa are all much smaller while the larger systems like South African Railways have typically only 1 train a day on a few principal routes.

All of ENR is standard gauge, the narrow gauge systems having largely disappeared by the 1960s or earlier, its passenger routes amount to about 3500 Km; the only other significant passenger operations are trams and metro in Cairo and trams in Alexandria. The bulk of the system lies in the delta roughly bounded by Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said; beyond these rough bounds are routes along the northern coast to Mersa Matruh and up the Nile Valley all the way to High Dam south of Aswan some 900 Km south of Cairo. To operate the system ENR has nominally about 700 diesel locomotives split roughly between GM of USA and Henschel of Germany, none of ENR is electrified, the mainlines are colour light signalled with British pattern lower quadrants everywhere else!

To focus on a few more interesting sections; I shall take these roughly north to south;

Alexandria avoiding line; Abis - Murharram Bey c.2 Km; this is the only seasonally-operated line on ENR in that it only sees the summers only (mid June- mid September) direct daily daytime trains Cairo-Mersa Matruh and v.v as well as the thrice-weekly summer only sleeper, although the latter traverses the curve around 03.00!

Mersa Matruh to Sollum; this is the Western Desert Extension actually built from just outside Mersa at Simla to the present day border town of Sollum; although in 1942 the line reached well into Tripolitania (Libya) reaching Belhamed over 260km from Simla.

According to the July 2004 timetable this had a weekly train out at 07.40 on Mondays and back on Tuesdays at 07.05 taking about 10 hours! In contrast the Superjet bus does it 3 times a day at least taking 4 hours!! This service has ceased, the train failed to run either way on the occasion of my recent visit and all "enquiries" as to whether the train ran, or on different days all seemed to meet with complete denials as to its existence however the question was phrased (mimed!) or who was asked!

Ishmailiya to Bir el Abd; perhaps the most bizarre service in Egypt is the daily "Sinai Peace train" that runs from Ishmailiya on the main Cairo-Port Said route, the train is formed of two typically clapped-out 3rd class coaches sandwiched top-and-tail fashion between a couple of GMs and runs from a platform so far behind the main station it is not even formally linked by subway. All attempts to establish when/if this train runs were met with denials and it was only by loitering and awaiting "events" before the timetabled 09.30 departure that it became clear this odd formation was indeed the train! The locals were astonished I wanted

to travel on it, especially as it turned out not to even go where I thought.....but I got on and we went. The train turns off the Port Said line just 13 km north at Ferdan and turns quickly away towards the \$110M fully retractable bridge over the Suez canal, it was possible to watch the two opposing sections swinging (takes 20 minutes apparently) across the canal to eventually open the way to northern Sinai. It became apparent that I was the only passenger, there were 3 crew on the loco and a party of about 10 sand shovellers....more anon.....and an ENR engineer doing the rounds, so I dismounted briefly to confront the "border officials", show my passport and relate as best I could my movements; however the official seemed really only interested if I was going to, had visited before, or indeed had any inkling that I wanted to visit Israel. As I responded "no, no and er...no" and he could not find a trace of an Israeli stamp in my passport I was apparently free to look at the sand of Sinai!! The line was opened just under 100km from Ferdan to Bir el Abd by Mubarak himself in 2001 and was the notional first stage in restoring the original route across Sinai to Haifa and then gain access to the whole west Asian system. However events have not worked out, the route runs through Gaza and the political situation has made advancing the project or even diverting it untenable, so now it in fact has retrenched back to a total middle-of-nowhere spot called Rumella 63 Km out from Ferdan. Once away from the canal the crew relaxed and gave me a cab ride, they said the line beyond Rumella was out of use now, I think for two years, and after a trundle through empty desert stopping to occasionally clear sand (and take photos!), even passing though a couple of totally isolated intermediate stations, we arrived in Rumella, beyond which the track looked collapsed and even weedy. We returned to Quantara East almost immediately, where the crew left the train, the timetable has two return trips shown between here and Bir el Abd (Rumella?) but the utter futility of running these is too much even for them as Quantara East is itself 5km from the canal with nothing but scorching desert between. The train cannot return till nearly midnight as the bridge only opens for rail traffic twice a day, the shipping naturally being a priority, so the whole exercise occupies a crew of 15?, Two locos and a couple of coaches every day to no purpose whatsoever! I escaped on the bus the staff whistled up from Quantara East and crossed the canal on the free ferry which happily docks just below Quantara West station, from whence the train to Cairo just happen to be leaving 10 minutes later!

הרכבת

Tanta avoiding line; this is essentially a long curve running direct from the line approaching from Muhallet Ruh onto the Cairo main line. Tanta is a very important traffic centre and all other trains reverse here on this route but daily one train runs southbound around the curve, it is the 05.10 ex Kafr el Sheikh, but it can be picked up at Muhallet Ruh at 06.15 off the first local out of Tanta at 05.00 (arr. MR 05.21) running then to Cairo. There is no reciprocal northbound working.

Cairo termini; Cairo's main terminus and indeed through station is Ramses, this would be/become familiar almost immediately to any traveller in Egypt but there are some complications, services operating on the route to Etay el Barud well north of Cairo initially set off south and share the Nile bridge then veer off at Imbaba and run along the west bank of the western branch of the Nile. The two platforms are well out of sight, accessed from the west side of Ramses south beyond the overbridge and its quite possible not to find your train and miss it if you don't find these platforms exist! I got lucky and after scouring the station found my train with just minutes to spare!

Cairo Furu'a terminus is very close to but separate from Ramses, situated just to its north east, it is served by services to/from Minuf and most readily accessed by the subways partway down the platforms and walking up the side of the station; it enjoys a separate route from Shibra el Kheima about 5 km out, most notably running around the carriage sidings away from Ramses. Opposite this and again close to Ramses is Limun station, which was once apparently Italianate in style but now has a gloomy interior and an exterior like a bomb shelter. It takes traffic from Zaqazig and is accessed via a wholly different route from south of Shubra el-Kheima. It can theoretically be accessed via a gate at the top end of Ramses platform 1, but if they have locked this it's a 5-10 minute walk around the block.

To the east of Cairo the previous interchange at El Marg off the end of the metro line onto the ENR service to Shibeen el Qanatir here connecting with the Cairo-Zaqazig service has changed. The metro now runs to New El Marg and indeed went there 18 months ago but now seems temporarily cut back to El Marg, which now sits about 3km from 23rd July station to which services are permanently truncated instead of offering an immediate connection; consequently either travel to New el Marg and walk or catch a minibus from El Marg to bridge the gap; the metro clearly veers away from the Shibeen line from here and so further truncations would not be anticipated and 23rd July looks like the new terminus/interchange point for the future.

South of Cairo the 2004 timetable had trains serving a very obscure branch off the main Luxor route to 6th October once a day and from Beni Suef to Lahun twice a day (once Fridays) however both attempts to find these trains and enquiries locally and back in Cairo all seem to indicate that services on these routes have ceased.

Just to briefly mention (for completeness) another obscure service which I described early 2006 is from Luxor to al Kharga outbound on Thursdays 07.00 and returning Fridays 08.00; it runs via reversal on the Safaga branch over the highest rail bridge over the Nile at Quena about 400km into the western desert; it is also possible to do the branch to Paris Oasis off this service and return on local transport to al Kharga, for the trains return on the next day; it arrives in Luxor around 16.15.

Finally a few observations (and contrasts) of the Alexandria tramways (and Cairo tramways). The Alexandria tramway system is really split in two between the blue interurban trams running from Ramleh terminus ultimately to el Nasr passing Sidi Gabr on the way and the yellow trams running a multiplicity of routes, partly overlapping the blue network but principally running around the south and west of the city. The blue routes are easy to cover as a tram 1 and 2 operate over opposite loops on the route so catching one out and the other back covers all the routes! The yellow trams suffer much more from traffic congestion and take a lot longer to cover all the lines; BUT in happy contrast to Cairo there are maps which at least make planning some traversals possible as opposed to just setting off on a voyage of discovery!! All journeys are 25pt (around 2p) so swapping about to get what you want is not expensive and services are frequent, while photographing trams does not seem to attract any adverse attention."

81:10

"A WARLIKE EPISODE".

This is an article by Dr. Siegmund Eckstein, of the old-age home Beit Anita Müller-Cohen, and appeared in the German-language 'Yakinton' No. 221, December 2007, p.6, a newsletter for German-speaking pensioners in Israel. Many thanks to Uri Ben-Rehav for sending it.

"The recent warlike incidents in our country awake memories amongst old soldiers who took part in the last World War. I myself served eight years in the British military and then three years in ours. Although old age has partially destroyed my body and mind, my head has remained clear and I can remember certain episodes from this period.

The reasons for both the heroism and the misdeeds were of various origin and cannot be compared with the warlike activities of today. I do not intend to grumble, but there is much that I remember and, when I sit and consider it, I don't know whether to laugh or to cry. I should like to recount one small episode from this time, during my two-year stint in a 'Bomb Disposal' unit.

In this unit each of us presented his young life on a plate, so to speak, and very few participants came back alive. My spirit was not really up to this and after two years I requested a transfer to a more 'humane' unit. I was summoned to my superior officer, who was very surprised at my wish to leave the unit. But I attempted to convince him, inasmuch as I pointed out to him that in spite of two years of active service in this unit I was still alive. In the end he agreed.

I saw an advertisement that Military Police were being sought - especially soldiers who spoke several languages. During my interview I was interviewed by a high officer in the Military Police who tested my training and my languages and I felt that I had made a good impression. As a Military Policeman I attended several courses. I was informed about my responsibilities and powers, and once I had completed this training I had more authority than a normal soldier. I passed all the courses with good marks, which was considered especially praiseworthy for a 'Non-Englishman'.

I was also informed that as a new recruit to the Police I would not get the nicest jobs. So I served initially, for example, in a military brothel in Port Said, where I had to ensure peace and order! After a few months I received my next posting, as Traffic Police on the ferry across the Suez Canal at Kantara. This also ended and then I was in railway service between Kantara and Gaza and Lod. Each evening a train with soldiers went from Kantara to Gaza and further. I, together with other policemen, had to check the documents in the train and then take the train back to Kantara the next day.

Then, during a check of three officers, the following happened:

I entered a First Class compartment to check the documents, and there sat a British Major, and a French and a Polish officer. I greeted them politely and received the Major's documents, which I gave back equally politely and thanked him. Now it was the French officer's turn and I asked him in my best French for his documents. He stared at me, astonished, spoke a few words to me and was seemingly overjoyed to be addressed in his mother tongue. Then I checked the Polish officer. Somehow I felt I had to play a joke; I remembered my mother, who had

Continued foot of next page

THE FIRST ISRAEL SALT COMPANY LOCO REVIVAL!

(Amith Ben-Shalom)

Israel Salt Company (I.S.C.) had 5 or 6 locos in use between 1936-1967. All of them were manufactured by Ruston & Hornsby, and were of three different models. The first one was supplied at 1936 via the agents of Siniaver & Sugarman from Jaffa. It was an 18/21 hp diesel loco, works no. 175415. Date of disposal is unknown exactly, probably in the fifties.

In 1989 Paul was researching the I.S.C. locos, and found the scrap iron of the loco in a dump area near the store house, at the north side of the factory. Its condition was very bad. Some years later, he informed Ran Hedvati of Ein-Shemer about it. Ran took it out of the pit to Ein-Shemer. After all the necessary confirmations, Ran and his crew started to restore it. Significant information was supplied by Paul to Ran: pictures, drawings and other type of information which helped Ran & his team to rebuild the loco, for static display.

Original emblems and plates were obtained by Paul from R&H enthusiasts in United Kingdom. The work was completed in November 2006.

In January 2007 it was moved (with 2 restored Vee-tipper Decauville wagons) back to Atlit, placed upon a short narrow-gauge section of track on the grass lawn in front of the management house of the I.S.C., and where a visitor-center is being rebuilt.

See also : 35:16 , 29:25, 28:21, 79:07(f)

IRR 124, 128, 136, 138.

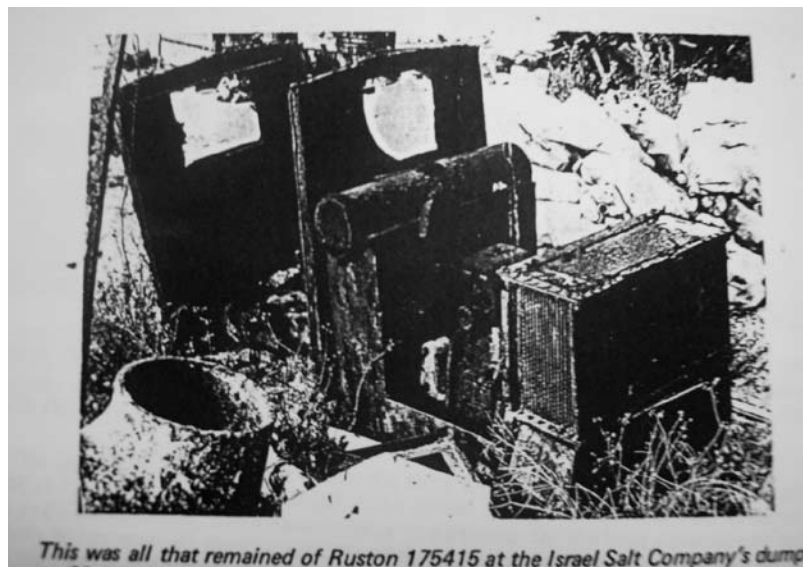
Pictures show:

1. R&H 175415 in 193? (courtesy: ISC)
2. The remains of the loco, as found by Paul in 1987 (Photo: Paul Cotterell z.l.)
3. Drawing of the loco, as given by Paul to Ran Hedvati.

Note the sarcastic remarks of Paul: "Good luck, and without "Fashlot" please, P.C."...

(Thanks to Ran Hedvati. Reproduction: Amith Ben-Shalom)

4-6. The restored loco at Atlit, 2007 (Photo: Amith Ben-Shalom).



This was all that remained of Ruston 175415 at the Israel Salt Company's dump

always sung Polish hymns, because the melodies were so nice. So I said to the Polish officer, in Polish, "Poland is not yet Lost" - which is the beginning of the national anthem. I was shocked when the Polish officer sprang up and saluted with two fingers, as is their military custom. He began to murmur something in Polish, which of course I did not understand. I gave him his papers back, wished them a good journey and departed politely.

At once the British Major came out to me and wished to speak with me. He said that in his 20-year service in the Army he had never yet encountered a Military Policeman who spoke foreign languages, and he asked, "Who are you?"

I answered that I was a Jewish refugee, who had fled from the Nazis, and was a volunteer in the Military.

A few months later I was summoned to the Headquarters of the Military Police and was rather tense about what this could be about. Such an invitation could certainly not mean anything good. I was led into an office, in which a senior officer sat, who showed me a letter from this Major. He said that I had brought great honour to the unit and that he would note this in my personal file!

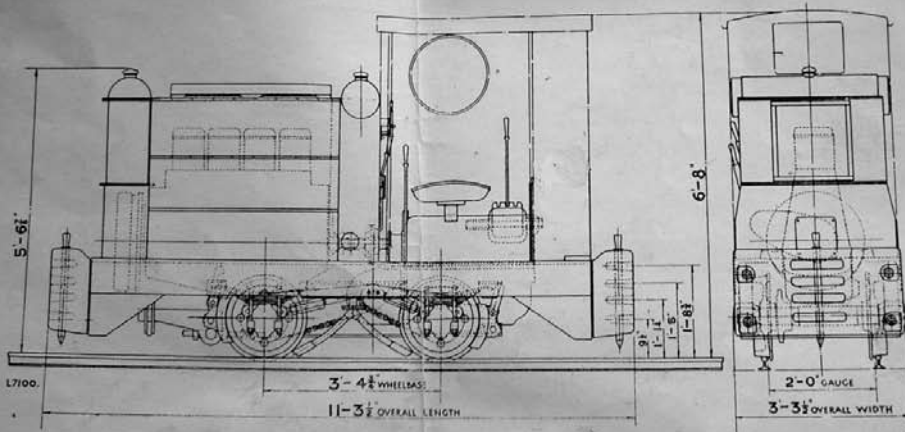
After this he asked me politely if I was a member of the 'Royal House', because in my naturalisation stood the name Ecclestone and not Eckstein. The name 'Ecclestone' was apparently also that of a part of the royal household! I let him know that the papers had been written incorrectly and that in fact I was Eckstein and not Ecclestone. When

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מסמך תוכנית מנוע רוסטון

RUSTON & HORNSBY LOCOMOTIVES

Specimen drawings from Company literature (reproduced to the same scale)



Class 44/48 HP From Publication 7362 (Leaflet 1937)



THE TIMNA MINES CORPORATION LOCOS AND THEIR FATE.

(Amith Ben-Shalom)

It is learned that three of the nine DEUTZ locos which used to be at the Timna-Mines survived until 2006 !!

According to Shmulik Taggar, the curator of the Eilat Museum, three locos were included in 1,000 tons of metal waste from the closed factory, which were sent for melting down at Haifa around the end of 2005.

Two other locos (56346, 57633) were plinthed at Rafi Nelson's holiday village in Taba long ago, and probably nothing much of them is left, as far as he knows. He assumes that they were covered with sand after the area was transferred to Egypt in 1989.

Nine Deutz 4wDM narrow-gauge locos were supplied to Israel between 1955 and 1962. Some of them worked at the National Water Carrier ("Hamovil Ha'artzi") before being moved to the Timna Mines. According to Shmulik Taggar, nothing is left of the documents of the Timna corporation, so the complete story will never be known.

Two of the locos have survived: (See 79:07(f))
 57082 is restored and active at the "Oaks-Train" in Ein-Shemer,
 56132 is in bad condition at Pardess-Hana.
 Both of them were found at an old Quarry east of Beer-Sheva a few years ago.

At the tiny Eilat Museum, two V-tipper wagons have been restored for an impressive display. Their Maker is unknown, but they look like a typically German one (which would make sense, because all were supplied together with the Deutz locos).

See also: Harakevet 1:3, 32:21, 33:10(e), 46:13, 48:12, Industrial Railway Record 158. .



1. Decauville wagons at Eilat-Museum (Photo: Shmulik Taggar, 11/2006)

Back cover: Entrance of n.g. line to Timna-mine (Photo: Shmulik Taggar, 02/2006)

3. Deutz 57082 at Ein-Shemer (Photo: Amith Ben-Shalom, 11/2007)

4. Deutz 56132 at Pardess-Hana (Photo: Chen Melling, 04/2003).

A SAPPER IN IRAN AND IRAQ.

In 'Black Eight' No. 123, Spring 2008, pp. 55-58 are excerpts from the War Diary of Sapper Charles Earl, of 190 Railway Operating Coy., RE. (formed at Bordon Camp, 15th. March 1940, initially sent to France, evacuated 12-18th. June via St. Nazaire.) A part is relevant to his time in Iran and Iraq and is therefore reproduced here:

"25-27th. August 1941. Russians from north and British from south occupy Iran to secure supply route for 'Aid to Russia' as promised by Churchill.

28th. September. Late at night march through town (Nantwich) to station - despite 'Top Secret' whole population turns out to wish us goodbye. Merryweather pumps described as 'Desert Machinery'!

29th. September. Arrive Liverpool - overnight in unfinished Council houses at Huyton.

30th. September. At Canada Dock, embark on Canadian Pacific Line boat Duchess of Richmond (20,100 tons, built 1928/9) - very appropriate for Railway Operating Company. Around 3,000 on boat. Last view of England is Blackpool Tower.

1st. October. Join rest of convoy off mouth of Clyde (some 60 ships) with HMS Glasgow, cruiser Devonshire, aircraft carrier Argos and several other escort vessels. One cargo boat had 4 grey painted locomotives on deck. Ours? Said to be one of the largest supply convoys for the Middle East. Proceed NW, W, SW, S and SE to reach Freetown (Sierra Leone).

14-18th. October. Spend 5 days on river at Freetown - one day heavy thunderstorm with brilliant lightning. Small boats bring out limes and bananas, hauled up by lines and baskets.

22nd. October. Crossed Equator. Father Neptune holds court, with 'Crossing of Line' ceremony.

October. Round Cape of Good Hope where part of convoy sails into Cape Town. Very rough where Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet. Good view of Table Mountain.

3rd.-8th. November. In port at Durban. Lady on quayside - Mrs. Perla Siedie Gibson, ex-Mayor-ess of Durban, welcomed us with singing. Appeals to troops to move (to balance ship) ignored. First leave party only 1/2 day ashore. Volunteer to stay and have 4 full days ashore. Free buses, trolley buses and trams all over delightful city. Many canteens, some lucky troops entertained in private homes.

5th. November. Children setting off sparklers and rockets in streets. Of course - Bonfire Night. Visit signal box (Dutch signalman), travel into Durban by electric train.

24th. November. Arrive Bombay. Have 2 days shore leave - very hot. View large Bombay Victoria Station and Churchgate Station, both with electric trains. Travel out to Dar-Dar Zoo by double-decker tram - 2 conductors, one up, one down.

27th. November. Transfer to troopship Devonshire (12,000 tons, 1938, Bibby Line) - purpose built for large numbers, plenty of open deck space. Sail same day, unescorted. Last view of 'Gateway to India'.

2nd. December. Sail up Shatt el Arab (the Arab River). Pass Abadan, the largest oil refinery in the world. Arrive Margil Docks, Basra, Iraq and tie up.

3rd. December. Disembark, then into lorries driven by Indian troops. Stores offloaded by hand. One crate of 'blanco' (for colouring webbing) accidentally (on purpose) dropped into river between boat and quayside. No further supplies received. Travel across desert to Ahwaz, Iran. Tent tops in place, sides to be erected. Our tent had last 3 sides left, with large gap on 4th side. Sleep in heap in corner, greatcoats on top, very cold.

7th. December. Japanese bomb Pearl Harbour. Americans enter war - news received some 2 weeks later!

1942.

January. Transferred to Andimeshk. Acted as batman to 2nd. Lt. Wilkins. Hated job - long hours. Managed one trip (with rations) to Doroud - 574 ft. to 4624 ft. - through mountains: 131 miles, 130 tunnels, numerous bridges. Snow waist deep across field to Bonishes Café. Trains ran!

26th. January. Posted to capital Tehran. Station built long before the railway! Timing trains Tehran to Ghom (a holy city of Iran). Often 15 hour round trips for 225 mile journey. Very cold in Tehran (3,600 ft.) Mt. Damavand (18,934 ft.) clearly visible - snow on top, all year round. Russian troops and Armenian civilians, Russian films and newsreels in cinemas. Small Bedford 30-seater buses all privately owned. Conductors pack passengers on board, buses then race to next stop ahead of competitors.

5th. March. 153 ROC relieve us in Tehran, posted to Doroud. Had one trip to Arak.

15th. June. 192 ROC relieve us, posted to Khorramshahr on Shatt el Arab. This was newly laid line from Ahwaz, where 4 berth jetty built. Billeted in radio station. Film shows at naval base - one projector. During film changes, enjoy first tinned American 'Rheingold' beer - ice cold. Marshalling yard unlit, ballast missing. Engaged on shunting: empty wagons to jetty, loaded ones back. Also trips to Failyah Creek and Beta Pack lorry assembly plant. Many derailments - rerailling by timbers (no ramps.) Persian crews on class 8F locos. At daybreak, engine stopped - crew down on ballast praying to Mecca! Not allowed to interfere. Tenders (4,000 gallons) took 2 hours to fill through one-inch pipe! Large 10 ton crane provided at Failyah Creek. American

locos unloaded there. Summer very hot - up to 120 degrees F in shade. No shade. Record temperature at Andimeshk 141 degrees F in shade, on coal-burning locos hotter! At one stage, a third of the Company down with heat exhaustion. Indian supply depot provided goat meat - killed, cooked and eaten within hours - no fridges. Tinned butter and bully beef could be poured from the cans!

24th. December. American railway operating troops arrive to relieve us, 3 men to our one. Troop train leaves for Ahwaz - crashes head on into down freight. One American killed.

1943.

1st. January. Leave for HQ at Ahwaz.

10th. January. Leave Ahwaz by barge with Company stores down Karun River. Two overnight stops, then on to Basra. Unload stores onto metre gauge train for Baghdad West, overnight. Morning parades 0830 hours. Overnight Mail from Basra arrives on time 0845 hours each morning.

9th. March. Posted with 3 colleagues to Mus-haida (Al Mushahada) 26 miles N. of Baghdad. Open flat desert all around - station like fortress. Iraqi Station Master spoke good English as all senior employees required to do - all documents in English. Shunting - 12 hour shifts. One daily mixed train to Samarra - made one return trip. Water train left Baghdad West 0220 hours Sundays, open timings, supplied underground tanks for week. Travelled by 'Taurus Express' (ran twice weekly) to Baghdad to see 'Gone With The Wind' at Al Rashid Cinema - fountain in courtyard. Film opens with record 'Grand March from Aida' which seems to go on forever! Return by evening 'Taurus Express' en route to Haydarpassa on the Bosphorus.

4th. May. Recalled to HQ Baghdad West. Depart by train to Shaiba Camp, Basra.

May. Embark on Ekma (5,100 tons) British India Steam Navigation Coy.

16th. May. Call at Aden. Coal (in wicker baskets) taken on by coolies. Ship filthy with coal dust.

21st. May. Sail up Red Sea and disembark at Port Tewfik (Suez). Egyptian train to Kaldi camp via El Qantara, Rafah, Gaza, Lydda Junction and Haifa. Swimming in cold Med each morning before breakfast. 2 days leave in Beirut. Line from Haifa - Beirut - Tripoli (Lebanon) newly constructed by Australians.

12th. June. Return to Haifa - at Tirrah Camp, then German Hospital in Haifa. Security duties at HQ, Palestine Railways. Visit Mt. Carmel, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

10th. July. Leave Haifa by train to Western Desert camp via Tanta and Zagazig. Visit signal box - British signals and Tyers 3-way block instruments. 'Shafto's' tented cinemas - awful films.

10th. July. British and American forces land in Sicily. Many Americans former Italians.

18th. July. Leave Alexandria on Ormonde (15,000 tons. 1917, Orient Steam Navigation Coy.) for Syracuse, Sicily...."



81:12a The Timna Copper Mine entrance