



Main picture and left: The port of Massawa provides an evocative backdrop both in the blistering heat of the day and the dark African night. The locomotive in both views is 0-4-4-0T 442.54.

Above left: The attractive viaducts include this example on a sharp curve at Hinzi, here being crossed by 442.59.

Above: The upper reaches of the Eritrea Railway are truly magnificent. Mallets 442.54 and 442.59 on a charter freight are utterly dwarfed by the surrounding mountain scenery at Devil's Gate.

Photos by Michael Bleckmann

# Steam by the Red Sea

The spectacular 950mm gauge Eritrea Railway continues to confound the sceptics. Despite still having virtually no through traffic, a recent visit by the German-based Tanago tour group found all well and local enthusiasm for the line as strong as ever.

Moreover, another of the line's 0-4-4-0Ts built by the Italian firm of Ansaldo had just been restored to traffic after many years out of service. Like its sister locomotives, 442.56 has worksplates with the Roman numerals XVI, the 'sixteen' referring to the years that had elapsed between Mussolini becoming the Italian prime minister and the locomotive being built in 1938!

The restored portion of the line climbs from the Red Sea port of Massawa to the capital city of Asmara, some 7,000 feet above sea level, in just 75 miles. Much of the ascent is on a ruling gradient of 1 in 30 and there are many splendid photographic opportunities as shown here.

Tanago is planning another short visit to Eritrea in March and a more in-depth tour in September. Details can be had on: [www.tanago.de](http://www.tanago.de) or in the advertisement in this issue. **NGW**

