

Dave Cooksley writes from Israel

Pictures of snow... nothing new in Canada. But David Cooksley included a couple of clippings from a Jerusalem newspaper in his last letter home to his parents because where he is, snow in February is news.

The 22-year-old son of Lucille and Ron Cooksley, R. R. 2, Rockwood, was, when last heard from, working in a construction crew at Eilat, a young town in Israel. Sending pictures of snow back home is like sending those proverbial coals to Newcastle, and the word got around. So the Free Press asked to borrow David's letters to glean a few more highlights of his trip for friends to share.

David Cooksley went over with friend Paul Cooper, son of Thelma and Art Cooper, R. R. 2. Paul has since returned home.

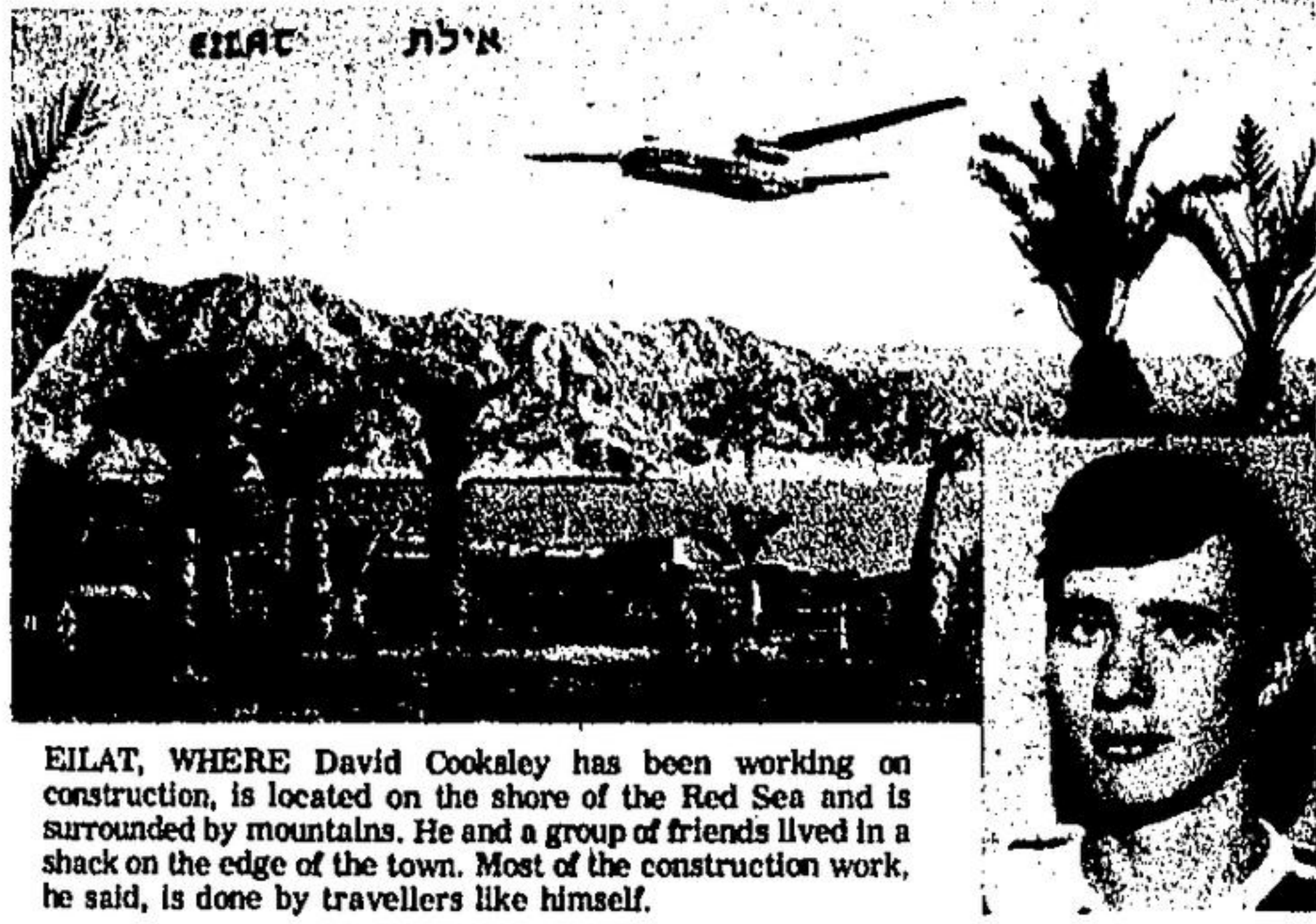
Following sun

But David keeps following the sun, listening to the advice of other travellers — and counting his money. Construction is his second job to raise money. He also worked on a kibbutz in Israel for a while. It was a farming colony with 200 workers. Both these jobs are popular with travelling young foreigners, he found. Another is selling your blood, which he did in Athens.

He has been living in a shack in a wadi which he finds handy, comfortable and cheap. He leaves for work at 5.40 to start at 6 and is done at 2.30 in the afternoon. It's the hottest time of day and they head for the beach till it grows cool about 4 p.m. Then shopping for supper — bread, peanut butter, cheese and jam seem popular with the young men there. Friends from the kibbutz come and go here as they move on.

Where next? David thinks northern Israel, maybe Jordan later. Many of the hitchhikers, travellers in vans and the real "hippies" are heading out to India or Africa, keeping where it's warm.

Christmas at Kibbutz
He celebrated Christmas and New Years at the kibbutz on the Gaza Strip with home-made decorations and gifts. Clothing and plenty of food was supplied to workers there but pay was low and the travellers, with only two days off a month, soon get a longing to move along. The property was surrounded by barbed wire and constantly patrolled. He observed that many of the



EILAT, WHERE David Cooksley has been working on construction, is located on the shore of the Red Sea and is surrounded by mountains. He and a group of friends lived in a shack on the edge of the town. Most of the construction work, he said, is done by travellers like himself.

travellers have university or college degrees, and many of these are the real hippies, living in groups. He finds he has learned a lot about people and knows his parents will find his attitudes have changed, when he returns home.

Worked for year

David is a graduate of Kemptonville agricultural college himself, and worked for a year before setting out to see the world.

Certainly one part of his education came in handy; he taught a companion how to play euchre, entirely in French. "It took all night but I finally got through to him!" He did admit, the little bit of French he knows has proven invaluable.

September start

The two young Acton men started out in September in Great Britain where the weather was fine and the natives were kind to hitchhikers. They got plenty of drives and their hosts on wheels would treat them to meals and drinks.

Off to Norway in October, where the two got different rides and lost each other; reunion was in a hostel at Oslo. The rides in Scandinavia were hard to come by; the girls were lovely; the price of food and train rides was a concern.

One night, rideless, they spent

in an unheated jail, another in a garage. Regular accommodations in hostels lacked heat, too, however. In Stockholm David got another job for four hours, carrying a placard and handing out advertising folders. And those smorgasbord meals were good and filling.

When they visited a friend out in the country from Odense, he wrote home to report the whole village bid them good-bye; they were assured they were the most exciting thing that had happened there in a long time!

Denmark they reported "the prettiest country so far." Off to Germany, where Canadian and U.S. armed forces bases provided shelter — and friends. Sherry Johnston, Chris Brunelle and Sharon Froelich from Acton were there working. It felt just like home, wrote David. They even played hockey with a pick-up team where a goalie like Paul was especially welcomed.

Here they got the news from home which they had been missing while they had no fixed address.

From Lahr they went to Munich, Rome, across Austria to Venice, Florence and Rome. Home come capsule comments about everything from the quality of water in the canals to the price of wine.

To pay for a ship hurt the wallet but off on the Adriatic to Athens, then Istanbul where the Turkish countryside and people provided contrasts and problems.

And then a flight to Tel Aviv. And in Israel he found the weather so warm he took off the ski jacket which, he writes, he "hadn't taken off since Norway."

Turn down French in kindergarten

A move to have French taught in kindergarten in Halton County schools was turned down by Halton County Board of Education Thursday at their regular meeting.

Although defeated, the program had won support from parents of 87 children and a number of trustees who felt the language would be more easily learned at a young age.

Others argued it would be forgotten and not be of any benefit because there is no place in Halton where the students would have occasion to practice the language.

A recommendation by senior administration not to implement the course won board support.

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