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FUNICULAR FOLLOW-UP

David Hitchen



Cossonay Gare and passing loop, September 2008.

PHOTOS: Malcolm Bulpitt



It was sad to learn in the last edition of *Swiss Express* that another funicular – the SSSF from Schlattli to Stoos – is to be replaced by a cableway. Some fifteen Swiss funiculars have now closed and others, such as the line from Cossonay Gare to Cossonay Ville, are threatened with a similar fate. Very few new systems have been created in recent years although the “funambule” line from Neuchâtel Gare to Université was a welcome innovative exception.

Fortunately a number of existing funiculars have been modernised and this hopefully will result in their continued use, however economic pressures could still result in more closures and the potential for conversion to suspended forms of transport such as cable cars, gondelbahnen or even chairlifts. There are a small number of private funiculars operating but these are difficult to keep track of as there are few published details of them. Listed below are those funiculars that have, over the years, been closed or converted to other forms of transportation.

Engelberg – Gerschnialp (1)
Engleberg – Hotel Terrasse + 2008
Harissenbucht – FÜRIGEN (2)
Kälti – Blumatt + 1970 (3)
Blumatt – Stanserhorn + 1974
Lausanne Gare – Lausanne Flon (4)

Lausanne Flon – Lausanne Ouchy (4)
Lausanne – Signal + 1948
Lauterbrunnen – Grütschalp + 2007
Lugano Funi. degli Angioli + 1986
Luzern – Dietschiberg + 1978
Luzern – Gütsch + 2008
Ragaz – Wartenstein + 1964
Rheineck – Walzenhausen (5)
Territet – Mont Fleuri + 1992 (6)

The symbol + is followed by the known year of final operation.

(1) Still retained for freight and emergency use. Passengers normally use the adjacent Gondelbahn.

(2) Line has recently been deleted from the Kursbuch but as official closure notices have not been seen its status is therefore currently unknown.

(3) Funicular service ceased following lightning strike and fire on 2/10/1970. These two sections replaced by cable car on 26/5/1976. Formal closure was probably in 1974.

(4) These lines had been replaced by the LO/LG rack railway by 1958 and this by the Metro in 2008.

(5) Funicular section converted to rack operation in 1958.

(6) Service ceased 3/11/1992 following a cable fault. Subsequent attempts to reopen (including formation in 1997 of “Pro Funi TMF” group) have so far been unsuccessful.