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STANSERHORN BAHN


Arthur Turner



ABOVE: Seen from the upper deck of a parallel cable car, showing suspension from cables at its sides.



For summer visitors to Central Switzerland and the resorts around Luzern, the main tourist attractions, apart from the boats on the Lake, are the three mountains, Rigi, Pilatus and Titlis, accessed by various mountain railways and cable cars. There are, however, many other similar but less well-known mountain and alpine areas which are well worth a visit and the Stanserhorn is one of them. The busy community of Stans is just 20 minutes from Luzern using the Zentralbahn's frequent services on the line to Engelberg, and just 5 minutes walk from the ZB Bahnhof is the lower terminus of the Stanserhorn bahn. The 3 section funicular up the Stanserhorn was the first mountain railway to be powered by electricity when it opened in 1893, although a "steam boiler" was available in case of power failure. The original line rose 1,411m from Stans to a hotel and restaurant at 1,849m, from where a footpath climbs up another 50m to the summit. In 1970 lightning struck the cable of the middle section funicular, setting fire to an intermediate station and spreading upwards to destroy the 100-bed hotel at the summit. In 1975 a one-section cable car was installed from Kalti, at the top of the lower section of the funicular to a new restaurant at the top. Meanwhile the first section of the funicular from Stans to Kalti, which was

undamaged, remained in use and this railway, now some 120 years old, still operates with wooden-bodied cars. One of these is an original, the other a modern replica built following its predecessor being destroyed in a collision with a truck in 2011 at a point where the line crosses a road. Between 2011 and 2012 a further major change was made to the top section when the 36 year old cable car system was replaced by a new 'Cabrio Luftseilbahn' where each cable car rides between two cables instead of hanging below a single cable. This system allows a conventional enclosed cabin to be supplemented with an open top deck, allowing passengers to enjoy a wonderful open-air ride and amazing views. The new operation opened on the 29th June 2012 when my wife and I were fortunate enough to be able to sample this unique experience. The opening of the 'Cabrio' system attracted major media attention and, as could be expected, there was a gala atmosphere in the restaurant at the top. Visitors to Stans can now enjoy both one of the oldest, and the most modern, forms of mechanical mountain climbing. 



BELOW LEFT: Stanserhorn 2-tier luftseilbahn arrives at summit.

TOP RIGHT: Stanserhornbahnhof, Stans.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Wooden-bodied car on funicular above Stans.

All Photos: Arthur Turner taken on 29/6/2012

TIME WITH TIMETABLES

Bryan Stone

The VÖV (the Swiss Association of Public Transport) has its office appropriately in the 'Diplomatic Quarter' of the Swiss capital, Bern. Its various functions on behalf of its members, which are all the railways, SBB and private (including the mountain lines) bus, tram and ship operators, and also most of the cable cars, need much diplomacy. One function is to manage the annual tariff reviews, and to co-ordinate and adjust the shares of receipts for each undertaking from through bookings, in the different classes, and all-line passes such as Swiss Rail and General Abonnements. It also ensures harmonized conditions and use of through tickets. There is also an international element, and this, finally, is only one part of what they do. They do not however co-ordinate timetables. That is done by the Bundesamt für Verkehr, the Federal Transport Department, who start from the Interval Timetable and the availability of paths in the network. Both of these tasks require the Wisdom

