

# A moving story : why a tower travelled from Vitznau to Wissifluh

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*SeTB No. 6 is a CFe 4/4 built by SWS and MFO in 1949 and still at work with the Stern & Hafferl organisation on the Achensee line in Austria. The picture is also taken around 1969 at Elm station by Peter Sutter. The red livery comes from the colour of the regional arms Glarus/Glaris/Glarona with the Saint Fridolin in black on the red ground.*

Following the note in Sidetracks (Dec. *Swiss Express*) there is a lot to report on this interesting project. Work has been progressing well, with a hardy band of volunteers working on restoring the old goods shed at Engi. Over 300 man hours have cleaned the accumulated dust and rubbish, and more than 30 kilos of paint has been applied! The museum is well on target to be opened to the public on 18th April 2009. An increasing amount of artefacts, pictures and documents are being accumulated for display. Two of the latest are a diesel engine (still full of oil) from a first generation diesel bus and



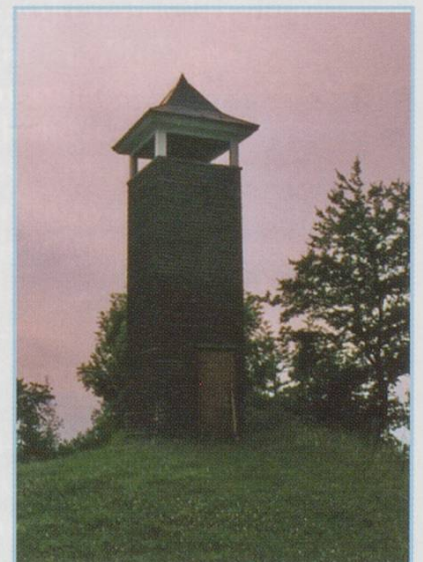
a horse drawn private sledge. An original lantern from one of the first series of trams, number 2 of 1905 is also ready for display beside many oil cans, big electric instruments, tools for the work-gang, and so on.

## A MOVING STORY

### Keith Scotland Why a tower travelled from Vitznau to Wissifluh

Vitznau, in central Switzerland, is well known as the landing point along the Vierwaldstättersee from Luzern where thousands of visitors disembark from the lake steamers and take the few steps across

to the trains of the Rigibahnen for a trip up the mountain. Right beside the landing stage is the modern depot of the railway, with its glass walls looking out onto the lake so that passengers passing on the ships of





original Vitznau Rigibahn Depot so the helicopter was utilised to lift the tower up to Wissiflüh as well. It was re-erected in 1991 and today serves as a great look out tower giving splendid views over the lake and Vitznau.

The whole operation is full of character. The web site [www.wissiflueh.ch](http://www.wissiflueh.ch) shows that the cable car operates 09.30 to 24.00 from Wednesday to

the SGV see the rolling stock. The current depot was built in 1990 and replaced the original one that had a tower - and the tower still exists, but in a most surprising place!

Vitznau is an attractive town that is usually missed by the crowds as they pass through on their way up the Rigi. It has two cable car routes, and one of these, the Wissiflüh, is particularly interesting. It is one of the oldest in Switzerland having been built in 1908. It climbs 448m, is 930m long, has no intermediate pillars or pylons, whilst the pair of small cabins can only hold a maximum of four passengers each. It was originally worked on the water ballast principle, which worked well, but on the 24th July 1942 it was converted to electrical operation. The main purpose of the cable car operation is to take customers to the Berg Hotel Wissiflüh, which is a character-packed typical Swiss mountain hotel that operates the cable cars by remote control and associated video cameras. In 1990 the original 1942 electrical mechanism was worn out and a helicopter was employed to lift the replacement motor to the top as there is no road access. Around the same time the owner of the hotel had purchased the redundant tower from the

Sunday. On Mondays and Tuesdays it only operates if you telephone 00 41 41 397 13 27 and ask! The hotel itself (which serves excellent wholesome organic and typical Swiss dishes) has a variety of rooms catering for 1 person through to 12 persons! There is also a terrace with spectacular views, and meeting and conference rooms (one of which used to be a bowling alley) but it is unassuming and blends perfectly with the landscape.

It is certainly a place to visit. The cable car is an adventure as you operate it yourself. Then you follow a path through the trees to the hotel, and look out over the whole panoply of the lake, the far shore, and the backdrop of the magnificent Alps - with an historic railway depot tower thrown in for good measure!

