

Territet-Mont Fleuri : Der Beobachter reports on the 'last chance' for this 'ghost' funicular

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The Territet-Glion funicular continued to operate on water power until 1973 when it was closed for modernisation. The new cars built by Gangloff operated with electricity which allowed automatic operation; the system used was the first in Europe. At the same time the twin tracks were replaced by a single line with a passing loop at the halfway point, requiring platforms only on the left hand side (going up). One of the original wooden bodied cars was plinched in the former right hand platform at Territet.

Further modernisation took place in 2009 with improvements to the cars (which were repainted in the new GoldenPass colours), and a metal stairway was laid alongside the track to allow passengers to evacuate in an emergency. *One is reminded in the commentary of the film "Railway with a Heart of Gold", about the Talylyn Railway in early preservation days, "A long, exhilarating mountain walk ahead"!* A new intermediate station, Collonge-funi has been opened, at which cars



Territet-Glion Funicular. *From a Barry Eastick postcard travelling in either direction stop on request; coincidentally, this serves an area formerly accessible via the Mont Fleuri funicular described below. *

Territet-Mont Fleuri Der Beobachter reports on the 'last chance' for this 'ghost' funicular



Barry Eastick Collection.

The Montreux suburb of Territet was once home to two funiculars running up the steep slopes above the community, linking it to the hotels and villas overlooking Lac Genève that developed at the end of the nineteenth century. The longer one up to the community of Glion still operates, but its shorter companion that was built to serve a hotel at Mont Fleuri carried its last passengers in 1992. It legally still exists, although its cars are long gone and only stubs of track remain at either terminal. It is a complex situation. The 422m line that climbed 200m at gradients of some 50% (1 in 1), was opened in 1910 and unusually at the beginning it also

served five locations on a 'Stop when requested' basis en-route. The beginning-of-the-end really came when the former grand hotel fell on hard times and was finally transformed into a girl's boarding school in 1987. Previously, in 1981, the Commune of Montreux became involved with the operation of the funicular that had seen a steady decline in its usage, and working with the MOB a new 25 person passenger car was commissioned, along with one of the older cars being made into a flatbed balance vehicle. Continuing lack of use of the facility finally caused the service to be 'temporarily suspended' in September 1992, and whilst some equipment was



Territet entrance of Mont Fleuri Funicular on 31/3/2005. M.Farr

Photos above and below courtesy of 'Wikipida Commons'.

removed at the time to keep it secure, other parts of the infrastructure have 'disappeared' over the years.

In 1997 the Federal Government joined the Commune in a move to spend CHF5.2m to rebuild and resurrect the line, but this bid also required financial input from Canton Vaud, and this refused to participate. Then in 2010 a CHF4m proposal was put forward to convert the line to an inclined elevator but for various reasons this was never taken forward. So in Autumn 2014 the BAV (Federal Office of Transport) and the Municipality, decided that the current situation of unauthorised abandonment had to be resolved. To this end a sum of CHF85,000 has been suggested as the cost of a study to consider three different scenarios: either formalising the abandonment; rehabilitation of the operation on the current alignment or extending the line to serve an increased catchment area in an effort to improve its potential. The line has many supporters who would like to see its resurrection, but it is also subject to a body of opinion in Montreux, and on the Municipal Council, who believe that even spending money on a study would be a waste of public funds. At the end of last year the

Green Party members on the Council put a fourth option forward. This was to retain ownership of the track bed and to convert it into a stairway linking the upper and lower sections of the community. Their idea is that this would retain its transport purpose whilst offering a safer pedestrian route between the two parts of the community than currently exists, and keep the route in place for other options in the future. +

