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Territet-Glion Funicular Michael Farr

ABOVE: An original car is preserved at the lower terminus. *RIGHT:* Territet-Glion at the half way passing point. *Photos:* Michael Farr

Today's Territet-Glion funicular is the result of an ambitious plan by Nicolas Riggenbach to conquer with a five-stage funicular, the summit of Rochers-de-Naye, which broods over Montreux. Riggenbach designed the rack system which was laid between twin metre-gauge tracks that ballooned out at the halfway point so the two cars, connected to each other by rope, could pass. Power was originally provided by water, the tank under the top car being filled, while the bottom car was emptied. When ready to depart the car attendants blew whistles, the brakes were released and the cars moved slowly away. A similar process still operates the Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway in North Devon.

A few days before the official opening on 19th August 1883, Riggenbach showed his faith in his rack system by standing on the platform of the top car, detaching it from the cable and letting it down using only the braking system. Thousands of people turned out for the spectacle, many even climbing onto house roofs for a better view;

one of those spectators was Victor Hugo. With safety demonstrated, the funicular opened, the second in Switzerland after the Giessbachbahn which had begun operation in 1879.

Though having no claim to be first, for many years the T-G held the record for steepness with a gradient in parts of 57% (greater than 1 in 1). The funicular climbed from Territet, whose station adjoined the Jura-Simplon main line, at 391m to Glion at 689m. In the event Riggenbach's original plan for a five-stage funicular was sidelined for a conventional rack railway from the funicular's top terminus to Rochers-de-Naye, which opened with steam traction in 1892. The funicular's importance was reduced when in 1909 electric trains of the Montreux-Glion railway began to operate, climbing partly in tunnel through the upper suburbs of the lakeside town. The top section of the railway to the Naye summit was electrified in 1938 allowing railcars to work through from the main line at Montreux.

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 plinthed 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 Talyllyn 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 Colletion.

CHEMIN DE FER FUNICULAIRE TERRITET-MONT-FLEURI

DEPART DU GRAND HOTEL

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