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Is it a railway?

Bryan Stone



When this writer was actively skiing, and snowy winters were the rule, a favourite place for us was Saanenmöser, above Zweisimmen. Arriving by road, or by BLS/MOB, we walked a few paces in the snow in our boots and with skis to the lift up to the Hornberg. This however was no ordinary ski lift. It was a sledge, pulled up by a cable and steered in grand firm grooves in the snow by a local farmer's lad. There was a driver's cab at each end, and he transferred the steering wheel for each ascent or descent. The cable was electrically driven, from a motor at the top. It opened in 1938; was called 'Funi-Schlitten', carried 50 passengers, took around 5 minutes and fares were modest. In 1986 it was abandoned; the two cars were 'grounded', one was displayed at the Hotel Hornberg, the other in a children's playground in Saanenmöser. The VHS (the Transport Museum in Luzern) has found Ruth, the granddaughter of the inventor Arnold Annen, who has collected notes and pictures. It appears there were five in all, the others being in Braunwald, Lenzerheide, Wildhaus and Chamossaire. The VHS's restorer Andi Hofmann is now looking for more pictures and details. The Saanenmöser sledge is now restored and a special exhibition opens at the VHS from 13th May.

Andi now has my pictures, and perhaps other SRS members can supply more from their own travels. Using magazin@verkehrshaus.ch will reach him. 

TOP & BELOW: The sledge left forlorn in the snow at Saanenmöser. *Photos: Bryan Stone*
BOTTOM LEFT: Last Day of working in April 1986. *Photo: VHS*
BOTTOM RIGHT: Transporting the carriage to the VHS. *Photo: VHS*

