

## Welcome

Sigriswil has a further attraction: the suspension bridge, which connects Sigriswil to Aeschlen. This bridge belongs to the Panorama Lake Thun circular route Association. Another way to get from Sigriswil to Aeschlen (or vis versa) is to follow the path through the "Gummischlucht" (Guntenbachschlucht), which is just as exciting as going over the bridge. The one allows you to see from above and the other lets you experience the wilderness of the gorge. Both together offer a wonderful round trip.

We would like to invite you to take the 45 minute walk through the gorge. You will go approximately 120 meters down and then back up again. This short hike is for everyone who is interested in discovering and experiencing the gorge feeling.



In this brochure you will find information about the path through the gorge and some interesting facts about birds, boulder clay, protective forests and botanical peculiarities.

Enjoy your trip through the beautiful "Gummischlucht".

Renate Gloor  
Sigriswil Tourism



## Trail Information

### Hiking Time/Difference in altitude

Distance: 1.2 km  
Total descent: 120 m  
Total ascent: 120 m  
Walking time: 45 min

### Journey

Public transportation (STI Bus):  
Bus stops in Sigriswil Dorf, Aeschlen Erliboden.  
Time table see [www.sbb.ch](http://www.sbb.ch)  
Parking: School House "Raft"

### Hotels/Restaurants

- 1 Panorama Aeschlen, 033 251 31 31, [www.panora.ch](http://www.panora.ch)
- 2 Bären Sigriswil, 033 252 80 80, [www.baeren-sigriswil.ch](http://www.baeren-sigriswil.ch)
- 3 Adler Sigriswil, 033 251 24 24, [www.adler-sigriswil.ch](http://www.adler-sigriswil.ch)
- 4 SolbadHotel Sigriswil, 033 252 25 25, [www.solbadhotel.ch](http://www.solbadhotel.ch)
- 5 Parkhotel Gunten, 033 252 88 52, [www.parkhotel-gunten.ch](http://www.parkhotel-gunten.ch)
- 6 Pizzeria zur Mühle Gunten, 033 251 16 61, [www.ristorante-zurmuehle.ch](http://www.ristorante-zurmuehle.ch)
- 7 Restaurant GRAND CAFE Gunten, 033 251 44 11, [www.grandcafegunten.ch](http://www.grandcafegunten.ch)
- 8 Schönberg Gunten, 033 252 38 38, [www.schoenberg.ch](http://www.schoenberg.ch)
- 9 Grabenmühle Sigriswil, 033 251 20 70, [www.grabenmuehle.ch](http://www.grabenmuehle.ch)
- 10 Tea-Room Rosy Sigriswil, 033 251 11 37

### Contact/more information

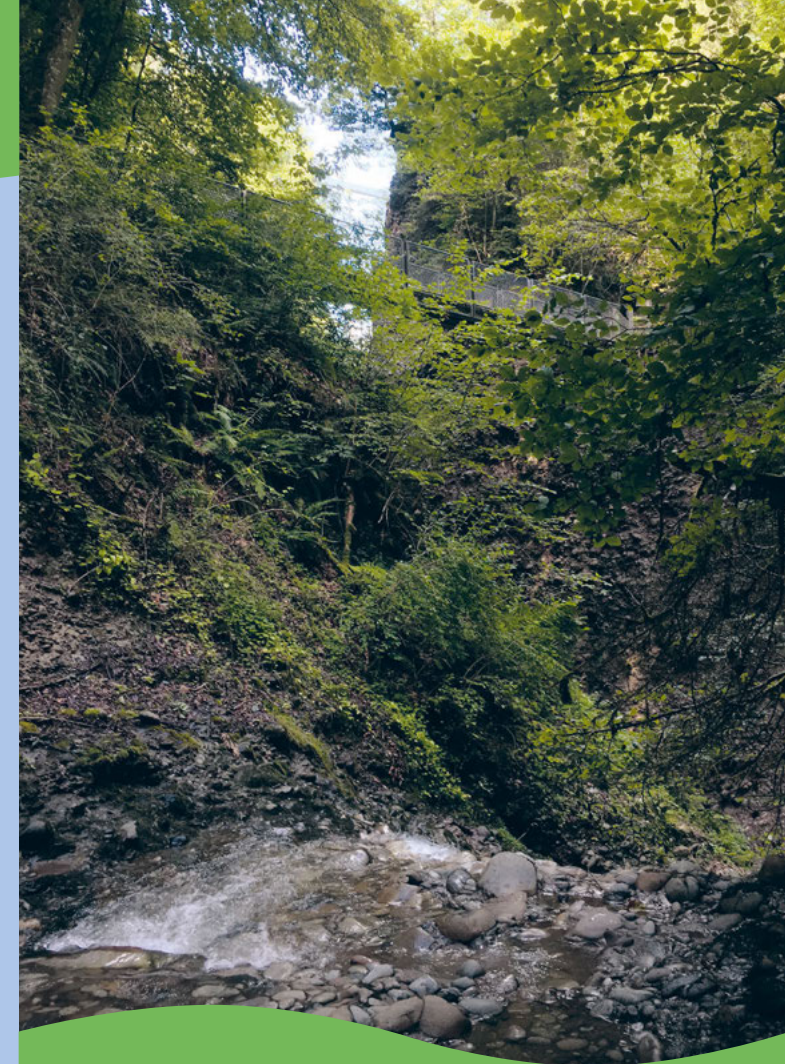
Sigriswil Tourismus,  
Feldenstrasse 1, 3655 Sigriswil, 033 251 12 35  
[sigriswil@thunersee.ch](mailto:sigriswil@thunersee.ch), [www.sigriswil-tourismus.ch](http://www.sigriswil-tourismus.ch)

### Sponsors:

Lotteriefonds des Kantons Bern  
AEK BANK 1826  
Ambassador Club Sigriswil  
Rotary Club Thun  
Einwohnergemeinde und Forstbetrieb Sigriswil  
VIVA Thunersee  
IMPULS AG – Wald Landschaft Naturgefahren, Thun

### Impressum:

Auftrag: Sigriswil Tourismus, Seestrasse 81, CH-3654 Gunten  
Texte/Grafik: IMPULS AG, Thun  
Forstbetrieb Sigriswil  
SchottMerz, Design/Kommunikation, Sigriswil  
Fotos: Lea Berchtold, Christoph Meier



## Experience the Gummischlucht (gorge)

The old church path Aeschlen-Sigriswil.







## Legende

### Location of the observation posts

- ① Birds – along the entire route
- ② Tschingelflüh, trees
- ③ Forest, picnic area
- ④ Boulders in the stream bed
- ⑤ Terrain, ramsons valley
- ⑥ Boulder clay

- i** Information sign
- “Discover the Gummischlucht” (gorge)
- Old church path/adventure trail
- Footpath/hiking route
- Street
- Suspension bridge (length: 340m, height: 180m)

- Bus stop
- P** Parking lot at the school “Raft”
- Church
- (Hotel)-Restaurant
- For more information see flyer, blue section

Follow these signs to enter the trail



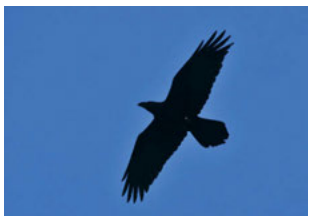
## 1 Birds

The Gummischlucht is a habitat for approximately twenty bird species. The best observation posts can be found at number 2 and 5. Here we will describe two of the twenty species.



Great Tit: The largest of all European tits. Because of its striking yellow breast and the black stripe which goes down the centre of its breast, it is almost impossible not

to recognize the great tit. When one is hiking through the gorge, you will be able to see and hear the great tit all year round. The competition of the males to impress the females and to defend their district can be heard and only the loudest and most beautiful voice can win. Each male has his own song. It is worthwhile to take a seat and to listen to two or more great tits sing for their women.

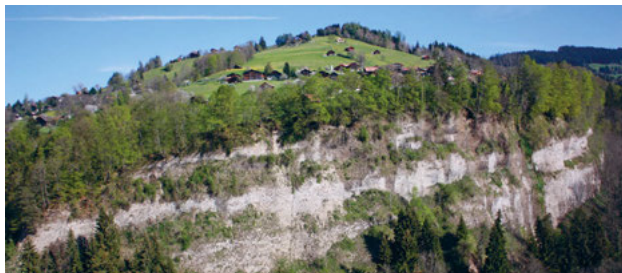


Raven: Because of its roll in many myths, legends and fairy tales the raven is well known. It has a length of approx. 60 cm and its wings span to 150 cm. The Raven is the largest European crow and songbird.

Feathers, legs and the beak are all jet black. The most common call of the raven is a deep and sonorous "krok kroa or kark. The raven is not shy of civilization and it is quite possible to observe this large songbird at play or with a spectacular flight show in the "Guntenbachschlucht". The raven was once looked upon as a pest or as a bird of ill omen. Today we know that the Raven has a very important role in nature.

## 2 „Tschingelfluh“ Trees

The Gunten stream has worked its way down the gorge through thousands of years of erosion has left a narrow cleft with steep rocky walls. A very special rocky wall "nagelfluh" or boulder clay is visible directly beneath Tschingel and is known as the "Tschingelfluh". The name "Tschingel" comes from the Latin word "cingulum" (belt) and explains the name of the "Tschingelfluh" as here we find belts of grass, and rocks in the wall. The name for the above mentioned village has thus originated from the visible aspects of the gorge.



Near number 2 you will also find some large examples of typical deciduous trees of this area: common beech (*fagus syvatica*), pendunculate oak (*quercus robur*), sycamore maple (*acer pseudoplatanus*)

Did you know

...that the common beech tree in German, known as Buche is said to have given the word book (in German Buch) its name. This was because the first books were made of writing boards attached together and made from beech wood. The German word for letters is "Buchstabe" and it is believed that the Germanic people of Europe wrote their runes (Germanic script) on beech wood. Thus the name "Buchstabe".

...that during the 19 hundreds the domestic pigs were driven into the woods to feed on acorns and beech nuts. When pigs feed in beech forests their meat develops a somewhat tranig taste and when they eat in oak forests the fat tastes a bit strong. That's why the best ham comes from swine which have eaten acorns.

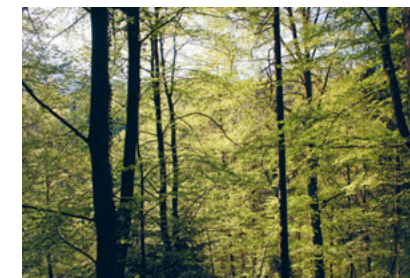
**For Observers:** A few European larches can also be found along the trail. Who can find them?

## 3 Forest

Approximately 50% of the district of Sigriswil is covered by forest and the major part of this has a protective function.

The forest in the "Gummischlucht" has different functions: it offers a habitat for animals and plants, it serves as a place of recreation and protects hikers from rock fall and landslides. During heavy rains the village of Gunten has profited many times as the forest has been able to protect it from flooding etc.

The goal of the forest here is not for the production of wood but to improve and increase the protective effect against rock fall, landslides and flooding. Because of this it is important to care for the forest. This means that large or crooked trees must be removed so that wet snow or storms don't cause the trees to fall into the gorge. Care of the forest must be done with this in mind. Every tree that falls down because of storms, old age etc. leaves the "Nagelfluh" (boulder clay) open.



This is a belt of rocks that lie under the humus and without the roots of the trees erosion takes place. It is

therefore important that the forest gives young trees a chance. They need enough room and enough light. So a controlled cutting of trees in the "Gummischlucht" is necessary.

The care of this forest is quite a challenge. On the one hand there is a lot of work which must be done and on the other, the cost of this cannot be covered from the proceeds of wood sales. To improve the protective function in the future all intervention must be done with a particular aim in mind and we must also have enough financial funds available.

The forest department is thus responsible for a healthy forest which in turn can be protective, recreational and a habitat for nature and thus contribute to an unforgettable hike into the gorge.

4

## Stream Bed (erratic boulder)

Why has such an impressive gorge originated here on not such a spectacular hill? The part of the district of Sigriswil that lies west of the "Sigriswilergrates" is mostly made up of elevated "Molasse" –which is a hard mass of "Nagelfluh" boulder clay. The boulder clay was created when the Alps pushed their way through and run diagonally. At some points cracks broke into the clay. Through these cracks water eroded the boulder clay thus creating the "Gummischlucht" (gorge) and other gorges on this rock mass. Along the northern side of the Lake of Thun there are also the "Cholere" and "Riderbach" gorges.



A special phenomenon can be found near the bridge. Do you see the big boulders in the stream bed? These are known as erratic boulders: Boulders that have come from the glaciers in one of the last ice ages and left behind when the glaciers retreated. These erratic boulders that are found in the gorge had probably rolled down into the stream bed during the erosion of the boulder clay. Here they are stuck in a corset made of stone. During heavy rains these boulders shift thus causing more erosion in the stream bed. Sometimes the erratic boulders move down

the gorge. Locals have stated that the biggest erratic boulder was higher up 40 years ago.

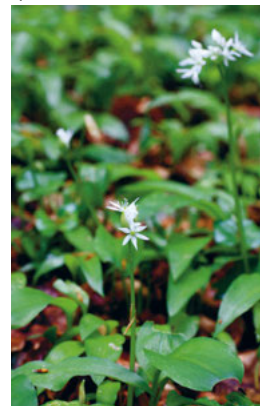
**For observers:** Who can find the erratic boulders near the picnic area? How many can you see?

5

## Terrain, Ramsons Valley (wild garlic)

Behind the bench at site number 5, a prominent slope of boulder clay rises. Why doesn't this slope fall evenly down the gorge? How could such a ridge develop? The answer to these questions can be found in the picture on the title page. The boulder clay in the gorge is built up in layers: hard layers (as in the picture of the "Tschingelfluh") alternatively with soft layers. The soft layers can erode much easier. The boulder clay behind the bench is part of a hard layer.

An example of a soft layer can be found in "Tälchen" the "Fischtere Gräbli". The process of erosion has had an easy time working on the soft layer which doesn't offer much resistance. Material that falls down, continuously fills up the eroded areas so that a soft hollow has been formed. This hollow is quite magical in May when a carpet of green and white ramsons (allium ursinum) cover the ground and let off an aromatic scent which fills the forest. Whoever is hiking earlier will be able to enjoy a small violet flower known as American liverwort or liverleaf (Hepatica nobilis). These early flowers profit from the old beech trees, as they only allow the sun to hit the forest floor in the spring. Because of this, these spring flowers can bloom in what is otherwise a very shady forest floor.



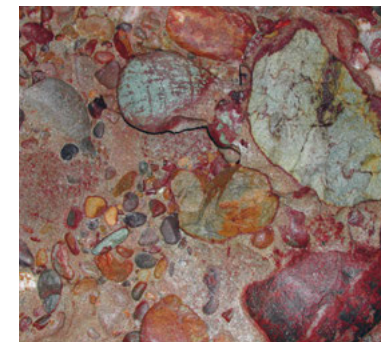
6

## Boulder Clay

(a glacial deposit consisting chiefly of unstratified clay with embedded boulders)

Along the path through the "Gummischlucht" the boulder clay is visible in many places. Boulder clay is a mixed stone formation made up of round stones (granite, gneisses, basalts etc.) from different origins and formations. A fine granular material with a high content of chalk filled in the space between the stones and gave the whole mass an amount of stability. The name in German "Nagelfluh" comes from the visible part of the boulder clay which looks like round-ed nails. (nagel)

Where do the different types of rocks come from that are in the boulder clay? During the formation of the Alps, rocks which had fallen down into the valleys were then taken away in rivers, and streams. These stones were rounded from the water and landed with sediment in a type of "molasses basin" where everything settled and hardened. Sigriswil is near the Alps and the "Sigriswilergrat" belongs to the "Kalkalpen". When the boulder clay was forming in the areas near the Alps the strength of the rivers was immense. That is why large rocks are found in the boulder clay in the Sigriswil area. The farther away one gets from the Alps the smaller the stones in the



conglomerate or boulder clay get. In central Switzerland you only find sandstone (region Bern) or even smaller particles in Mont Vully.