

THE SCHAFBERGBAHN

A narrow gauge rack railway in HO scale

Continuing the account of the innovative model of this Austrian mountain line, featuring stock from one of that country's specialist suppliers, which began in our July edition.

Painting houses

I knew that for a whole town district quite a few houses will be needed, and kits are expensive nowadays. Over the years I had been collecting structures but unfortunately not enough of them were really suitable: following the instructions, I could have assembled them in one evening. Fortunately, one can often buy already built house kits cheaply secondhand, at a fraction of the new price. The disadvantage is that these houses do not meet the standards which I currently set, so they must be adapted. I do this mainly by repainting them in matt colours. For this, I set to work as follows:

1. I always remove the roofs. I can then paint these separately in my chosen colours. I can also deal with the walls more easily, especially the insides.

2. Then I see if any parts are detached or badly glued so that I can also remove those and paint them separately.

3. From the loose parts that I then have, I first paint the deeper-set parts and finish with

the projecting parts such as beams or decorative borders. Take care that two colours always come together in a seam or edge.

4. I always leave the windows alone (apart from the frames) because you can never manage without getting paint on the glass.

5. After painting I glue the houses together again and give everything a wash of well-thinned black or another dark colour. The advantage of this is that inaccurate edges between two colours will be 'pulled straight' because the black settles into the joint.

Finally, I finish the whole thing off by going over the building roughly with a dry brush. I mostly use a sand colour for this.

The building is now ready and can take its place on the diorama. For a good effect, it is worth painting the same design of house in two or more different styles and placing them next to each other.

The station

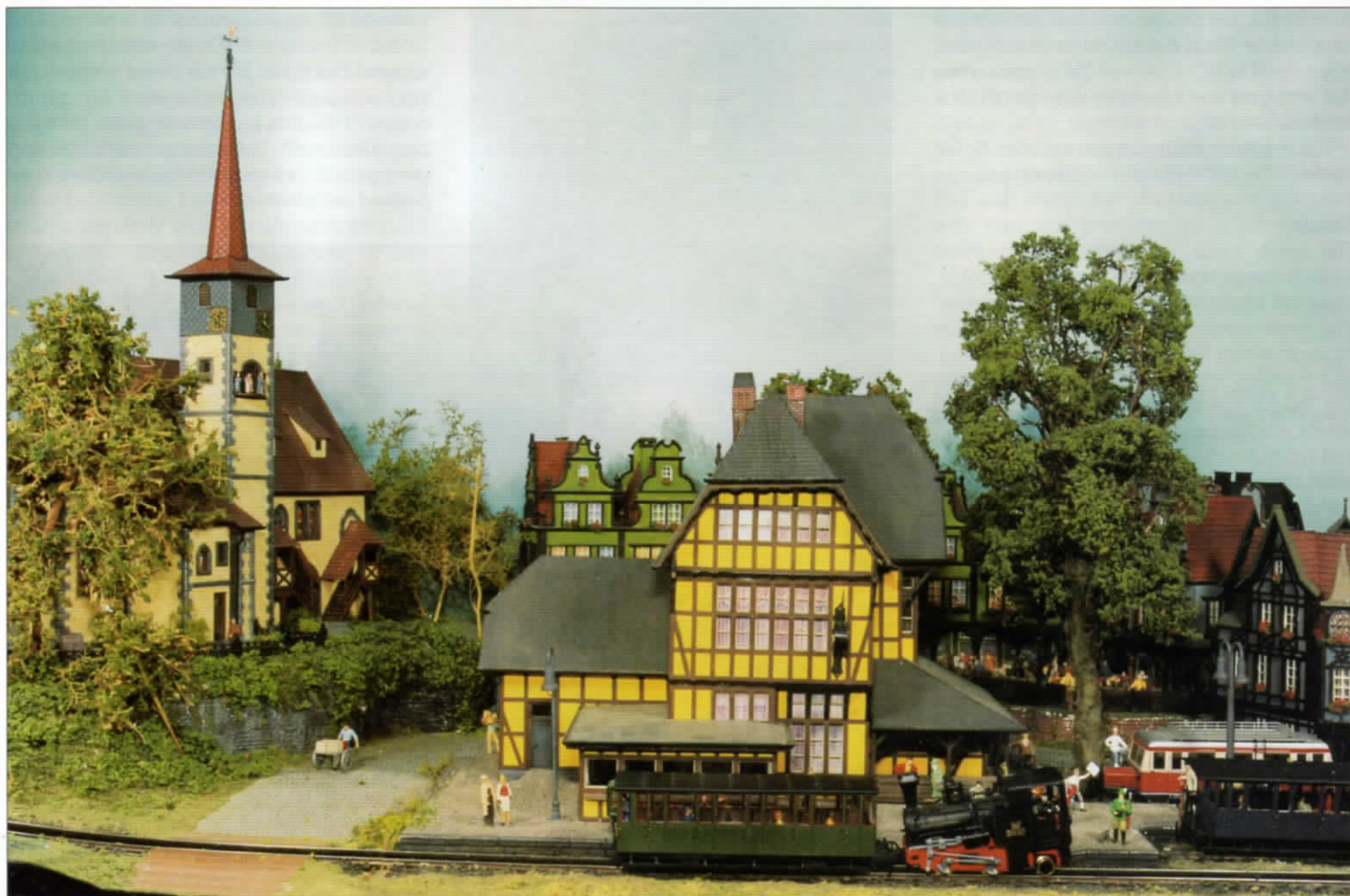
The small station building (Rothausen) is by Pola. While all the parts were still on the sprue I overpainted them in mainly brown tints, and the roof in light blue. The whole thing again received a wash of black. After that the station building was assembled according to the instructions. I accentuated the half-timbering of the walls by applying light brown by dry brushing. Also the windows were dirtied by this method and the whole model took on a natural appearance. The baggage depot doors are fixed slightly open and between them is placed a Preiser figure who has just begun to open them.

Bridge

The bridge is a splendid model from Bochman & Kochendorfer that in my opinion was a worthwhile acquisition and an eye-catcher on any layout.

When installing a bridge, ensure that it can always be removed, so that one can easily work under the bridge if necessary.

Below: a view of the station area. A narrow gauge loco brings goods for transhipment.





Tunnel portals and retaining walls

The tunnel portals are plaster casts of an N scale portal from Noch which was very suitable for narrow gauge; because the stone is very coarse for N it does not look too small when used in HO. I painted the portals while wet with grey and blue/grey. A wash of black finishes them off.

The retaining walls are arches from Noch, made in the same manner as the tunnels.

Roads

The brick roads are from Wieland. Here again castings were made from latex moulds, and I cut off the mould straight on one side. This true edge then connects beautifully squarely every time against the next casting. The castings were installed on the module just as the plaster hardened. This method allows the road surface to take up a curved and irregular shape like those in the mountains. When the road was finished I painted the castings grey and after that applied much thinned black so that the joints became darker. In some places I removed a piece of plaster so that the surface was not level. The gap was then filled up with Woodland Scenics ballast so that it resembled a section of repaired road.

Backscene

The backscene was painted by Len de Vries. Hardboard was chosen as the backscene has to curve round. The method can be summarised as follows:

Step 1. The shiny side of the hardboard is painted blue with a roller. The blue is matched to photographs.

Step 2. The contours of the mountains are painted in well-thinned dark blue paint.

Step 3. This is relieved with simple and more or less arbitrary strokes of dark blue and white, suggesting sunlit areas and snow on the mountains.

Step 4. With an airbrush or spray can a white wash is misted over the mountains, mostly where they merge into the sky. Now you can spray the clouds - not too many, or there will be no blue left.

Step 5. Now the fir trees are painted on with vertical stripes of well-thinned green, dark at the front and light at the rear. A light wash of white on top again blends it all together.

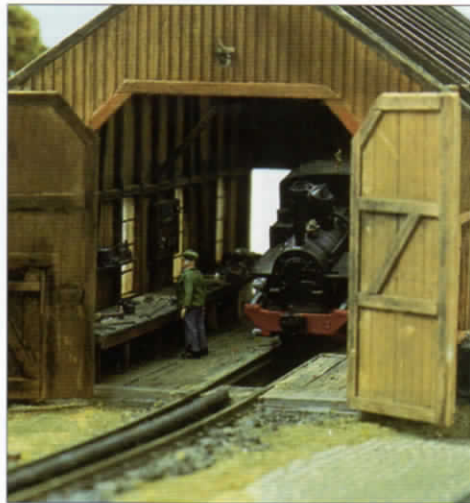
Step 6. Finally a few trees were painted to suggest that those on the layout merge with the backscene. The leaves were first reproduced with thinned green paint using a broad flat brush. The paint ran out a little and gave a patchy effect. Next the branches were painted on in brown.





Track and rolling stock

The rack loco by Gerard runs without any trouble if it is realised that track *and* rack must be kept very clean. Note above all that during ballast laying the PVA glue must not get between the teeth or it will lift the loco wheels off the rails. Scenic foliage material also gets onto the track and then between the gear wheels, which consequently lose their grip on the rack. In order to prevent this happening at exhibitions, I have to clean the toothed wheels regularly and carefully with the point of a toothpick. Running rails can best be kept clean with petrol and the rack with a small steel brush, though care is needed. Further, it must be ensured that the working parts, worm wheel, and motor are well lubricated with an acid-free oil.



It seems that the suggested minimum track radius (30cm) is too small and it is better to keep to around 50cm. Ensure also that track is never laid in a S-bend and that a minimum straight section of 15cm is inserted between two curves.

From experience it seems to be pretty difficult to order anything from Gerard after initial purchase: delivery times reckoned in months were not uncommon. My advice is to buy everything that you think you will need with your first purchase, in order to avoid later disappointment.

(Editor's note: we understand Gerard equipment can be obtained through Winco.)

Opposite page, top: the loco passes a grade crossing. The road surface is made up of plaster castings as described in the text.

Opposite page, bottom: the spruces are made from steel wire with suitable twigs from real conifers added. The branches are preserved with glycerine and water (mixed 1:4).

Above: a view of the central scene. In the foreground is a waterfall with a small lake where swimmers are sunbathing, and in the background is the glen.

Above left: the loco is prepared for another day's mountain-climbing. (Photo: author).

Left: the water tank is replica of one on the Schneeberg, in the district of Wien. The goods cableway supplies the hotel where weary hikers can find rest. The toolshed is from Woodland Scenics.



Photographs by the Peco Studio.