

Hatzenplatz-Gutenstuben – a layout in a tool case

Rob Reinders

The action

Where we are isn't entirely clear, but it is a bitterly cold winter and Christmas is coming. A solitary traveller has endured a cold trip on foot as he arrives at the lonely halt of Hatzenplatz, because the village of that name is 7km away. Normally it is easy to reach on the bike, but conditions are too bad at this time of the year and the bridges are slightly unreliable these days. However, he is firmly resolved to visit his family this Christmas. After a long delay he hears the growl of a diesel engine in the distance, and eventually a red railcar emerges from the tunnel: the train that will take him to Gutenstuben.



At and around Gutenstuben station it is a busy time and Christmas is really in the air. Family and friends meet, and former President Obama and his wife meet the former Pope Benedict, and even the Austrian Emperor Franz-Josef and Empress Elisabeth are present. A band is playing music and at a stall all kinds of tasty things can be bought. In the distance we see a shepherd and his flock, and all head for a mountain trail on their way to a stall, where a child is said to have been born...





How it was made

Hatzenplatz-Gutenstuben is a tiny layout built in an old tool case. Despite the small size, I didn't want a continuous run, but point-to-point operation. A locomotive and carriages is useless for the purpose, so I looked for a suitable model to run on it. Having searched the internet, I found the Czech railcar type M11.0, which appealed to me due to its small size and the driver sitting in a lookout bubble in the roof. So it hasn't got a front and rear. I built the first model from styrene, and fitted it with a Kato 103 chassis. Later I drew the model in 3D and had a few copies printed at Shapeways, meaning I have two spare models in the fleet. A shuttle circuit enables automatic operation.



I chose to turn the case upside down, which means the layout was built in the lid. Thus I got more space for the mountainous scenery and the tunnel. The landscape was made from Styrofoam, foamboard and plaster. Despite the snowy finish, I first finished the scenery in all kinds of autumn colours. The snow cover, by Precision Snow & Ice, was applied in several stages, using hairspray. The simple trees in the distance can be taken off so the case can be closed.

