

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: - (2013)
Heft: 113

Rubrik: Modelling news

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BUILDING A LASER CUT KIT: FIDES PLATFORM SHELTER



A similar platform shelter at the station of Bowil on the standard gauge BLS line between Bern and Luzern.

All photos: Peter Marriott

Peter Marriott experiments with a building kit from Switzerland

Whilst looking around the Hobby Shop in Gelterkinden last summer I came across a selection of new Fides kits. I remember building one of the Fides wooden kits about 20 years ago and I was intrigued to see that the company is still producing kits and that their range had been both modernised and expanded. As members may know Fides is a Swiss company producing building kits and accessories in N, HO/OO and O scales. The Fides range of building kits uses a mixture of laser cut timber and card components. In addition white metal accessories are included in some kits together with plastic glazing sheets. Each kit has full assembly diagrams plus several building tips in English in its accompanying leaflet. I recall that the instructions supplied with the Fides kit that I built a couple of decades ago were inadequate and actually put me off building any more of their kits at that time. I am pleased to report that the instructions supplied with their newer kits are of a far higher standard. They are much clearer and user-friendly. However, given the mix of materials listed, I would not recommend these kits to new recruits to the hobby because they do require a range of skills that involves a variety of adhesives, primer and setting times. That said the result of the kit was very pleasing. The HO scale kit we built for this article retails at CHF29, which I consider to be value for money.

Whilst this particular platform shelter is based on the Zentralbahn station at Niederried, its design is pretty typical of SBB local stations waiting shelters. It could be adapted to represent a modern structure on a UK based layout.

Of interest to UK modellers is that Fides manufactures a kit of Charlbury station on the Cotswold Line. To make up the complete station at Niederried, Fides retail the station building, WC building and goods shed in HO scale.

I will let the pictures and accompanying captions explain how I went about making up this model. For more information about Fides products go to www.hobby-shop.ch/modellbahn/fides/index.html. This article is an expanded version of a short article that appeared in January 2013 issue of Model Rail magazine.

The model and its availability

Fides Laser-Cut HO-scale SBB/ZB Infostand/platform shelter at Niederried. Fides kits are available at some model shops in Switzerland, plus the full range is available by mail order from the website above.

Difficulty of assembly and time to make the kit

This is not really a beginners' kit but is more suited to someone who has some model building skills, but it gives great satisfaction once the kit is built. It took about 4 hours to make the kit including painting time, but not including the drying time of the primer, paints and adhesive.

Tools and materials needed for assembly

A re-sealable cutting board; small metal cutting pliers; craft knife with new blades; steel rule; small file to smooth down "nicks" in the cardboard; metal and timber pieces; PVA adhesive; primer for painting the metal parts; selection of acrylic paints for the supports, roof and base; several small paint brushes. 

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1. The mixed selection of parts with the Fides kit. The components include wood, white metal detailing parts, brass, metal and photographic paper.
2. The mainly pictorial instructions usefully contain text in English. The various component parts are colour coded in the instructions.
3. A few of the tools required to assemble this kit including track cutters, a micro paint brush, a small file and primer for the metal parts.
4. The supports for the canopy are made from brass bolstered by additional L shaped metal pieces along the top edge that need to be fixed to the brass section with superglue or soldered.
5. A section of untreated timber to the right and to the left the timber pieces that have been painted with slightly thinned acrylic paint. Whilst the grain in the wood is evident in this picture most of the sections of timber are covered with photographic paper.
6. I fixed the base section of timber to a much thicker piece of cardboard to give it some support because the timber section was slightly warped. Also seen are the roof section with supports in place and the semi gloss photos cut to the right size and the edges "painted" using a black felt tipped pen.
7. The base is at the top of the picture, the canopy to the left and the supports to the centre.
8. The finished platform shelter. Whilst it is Swiss in outline it demonstrates the construction of a mixed materials kit.

