

Wysoka Gorzowska

A rural passing station in western Poland

Tomasz Florczak describes a wayside station, real and model.

Photographs by the author, unless otherwise noted.

Everything that is reported here began with experiences that happened decades ago, but they are still unforgettable. They shaped my childhood and youth. They remain in my memory as vivid images. This small country station once sparked an interest in the big world of railways. This is where what became a passion for model railways began: Wysoka Gorzowska was the start of my realistic model building.

Wysoka Gorzowska (Hohenwalde)

Wysoka Gorzowska station is located at kilometre 19 on the former line 415 connecting Gorzów Wlkp. with Myslibórz in western Poland, which opened in 1912. Back then, the station was called Hohenwalde, and was located in Neumark, part of Prussia, and the railway connected what was then Landsberg on the Warthe and Soldin. After the end of the Second World War, the line came under the management of the PKP.

Above

During the day-to-day operations of the station, goods trains could be scheduled to overtake passenger trains. To ensure the safety of people getting on and off the passenger trains, the signaller had to ensure that the goods were routed through the outside track. The passenger train is head by a Polish class 0149 2-6-2 – the beautiful model was made almost entirely from brass by the famous Polish model maker Zbigniew Molenda. The goods is headed by a class Tr203 2-8-0, an American S160, notable for its massive tender. The model is based on a kit from DJH Model Loco but required some corrections – for example, the cylinder block had to be narrowed by 8mm.

My grandfather, Józef Florczak, worked as the station master from 1956 to 1981. With his family, he lived in a company apartment on the first floor of the station building. My father Tadeusz grew up here. As a little boy, while visiting my grandparents, I remembered the station from the 1970s and 1980s. I remember seeing the crossing of two passenger trains hauled by Ty2 or Ty43 2-10-0 steam locomotives. I remember the working atmosphere of a traffic controller at the station. I also liked the transfer work in the goods yard. The shunting operations that could be witnessed here were also impressive. There was always a lot of activity at the wood loading area. How did the rumbling logs get into the

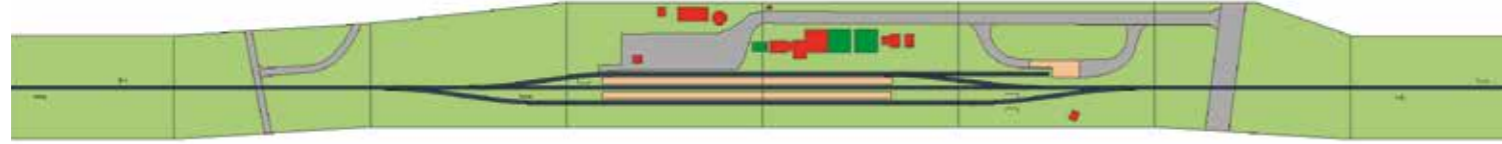
wagons? It was certainly the sum of all these experiences that remained in the memory.

My adventure with model railways began in my pre-school years when I received a Piko starter set. Over time, more models of rolling stock and infrastructure were added to the collection.

In the early 1990s I built my first proper model railway – my hobby was developing. In 1997, after passing the high school leaving exam and receiving confirmation of admission to advance studies, I decided to recreate in miniature the station that I remembered so well from my childhood – Wysoka Gorzowska!



Wysoka Gorzowska



7.3m

Below
A scheduled crossing with Ty2-1155 and SP45-083. The double-deck set behind the diesel was imported from East Germany, but the Polish versions did not have rounded hipped roofs, unlike the DR stock.

Right
The station building is practical, functional, and in an attractive architectural style. The extension on the left with the large window housed the signal box. Stationmaster Józef Florczak lived on the first floor of the main building until the 1980s.

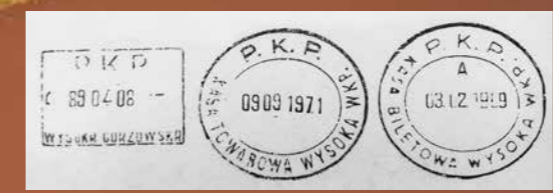


The layout was designed to be portable, on separate baseboards.
For the purposes of building the model, I made measurements of the track layout and station structures. I made all the buildings from scratch.
Apart from shortening the length of the track and the installation of barriers at the level crossing, the model corresponds to the situation in the second half of the 1970s.

Motivation with emotion
My grandfather knew his station like the back of his hand. He explained what was happening patiently and expertly. Whatever his grandsons asked him, grandfather always found an answer. My father noticed his sons' interest in grandfather's work, and took them to Wysoka Gorzowska as often as possible. By the early 1980s, grandfather Józef had retired but still lived on the first floor of the station building. Steam locomotives of PKP classes Ty2 and Ty43 still met on the station tracks below, so not only images remained in my memory but also the sounds when these powerful machines started away. One day, all of this would be a thing of the past, but the railway experience had long since become the model railway adventure. That eventually brought a small Polish country station to the OntraXS! exhibition in Utrecht where visitors learned about the old country beyond the Oder, about the people there and their railway.

History with deep cuts
Where there was once a busy railway, grass now grows: the former station at Wysoka Gorzowska is history. The station building, which is now privately owned, still stands and reminds us of changing times. Line 415 connected Gorzów in the Lubuskie province with Mysłibórz in the south-west of the West Pomeranian region.
The relatively late opening for a Prussian branch line proved to be an advantage, as it resulted in tracks that were appropriate for the expected traffic. The special feature of the new line was the solid station building – no unsightly

Below
Selected traffic stamps.
I have the originals – my grandfather definitely worked with these stamps at the station.



Kasa towarowa = goods shipping office.
Kasa biletowa = ticket office.



Left
Unloading coal wagons takes a lot of time.
 The transfer from an open wagon to a lorry is made easier by a conveyor belt. The heavy Russian type KrAZ tipper lorry is getting some attention to its engine. On the short low-side wagon is a type Wls40 narrow gauge diesel – a rather rare load. This model was made from a 3D-printed kit.

brick building looking like a barracks but a pleasant building more reminiscent of a small town villa than a country station greeted traveller: clear geometric shapes, simple but tasteful façades, and a square hipped roof. A service building with signal box was harmoniously attached to the side. It could not have been better.

In the years after the First World War, control of German railways passed to the DRG but here operations largely continued as before with Prussian locos and stock. It was only the Second World War that brought about a major turning point. Everything changed: in 1945, in accordance with the new territorial definitions, the Polish state railways (PKP) took over the line. Until 1947, the station name Wysoczyca was used, followed by the official railway name Wysoka Wielkopolska. With the timetable change in 1968/69, the station name changed again, to Wysoka Gorzowska (Wysoka / Gorzow).

In terms of their appearance, however, the track layout and buildings remained what made them so fascinating: an ideal prototype for an elongated, operationally interesting layout as a living memory in miniature.



Model building with staying power

In 1997, I decided to recreate Wysoka Gorzowska in HO. The experiences of my childhood and youth demanded that what was to be created had to be true to the original, realistic, and functional. How long it would take was irrelevant. However, I did not imagine it would take more than two decades! All the tracks, turnouts, signals, and structures could only be recreated by scratchbuilding – there were no kits or ready-made models. Wysoka Gorzowska, with its landmarks, the beautiful station building and the striking water tower, even the humble outbuildings, demanded an individual approach.

The station has two continuous main tracks, a goods loop, and a siding serving the loading dock (to the right of the station building).



Right
2-10-0 Ty2-1155 with two 'Ryflak' coaches.
 The class Ty2 was often seen in Wysoka Gorzowska. With its low axle load, it was considered an ideal branch line machine. The model is by Gützold, but a new boiler, a new cab, and numerous new fittings were required to make an accurate replica.

Below
The Praga V35 long timber transporter with a rotating bolster for logs, imported from Czechoslovakia, was common on the roads in Poland in the 1970s.
The densely forested region around Wysoka Gorzowska supplied raw timber as the most important rail traffic.

Below left
The working lock on the goods loop.
 Photo: editor.



Below
 A goods train crew van is coupled behind the Tr-203 2-8-0. This accommodated the guard and often also a shunter.



The layout was designed as an elongated diorama. There had to be enough space on the main line to the left and right of the station so that shunting did not require trains to leave the scenic section. The whole thing was supposed to look like a wide stage, like a panoramic showcase. A realistic landscape background was therefore just as necessary as friendly, bright lighting of the scenery. A transition was planned between the foreground and background: no-one should be able to tell what might belong to the three-dimensional foreground and what might belong to the two-dimensional photo background.

Construction with partial goals

Although the diorama was built in stages, the quality requirements inevitably took a lot of time. With the aim of recreating Wysoka Gorzowska station as it was in the second half of the 1970s, minor compromises could not be avoided. But it soon became clear that shortening of the tracks for reasons of space did not detract from the overall impression of Era IV. This included the individually developed track construction technology, the method of working the turnouts, and the functionality of the two large storage yards on the left and right.

Right
The use of containers began in Poland in the late 1960s. As there were not enough flat wagons with locating pins for containers available, four-wheel low-side wagons were used initially. The class Tr203 was still running until the end of the 1970s. In front of the loco is the entry signal for trains coming from Myslibórz.



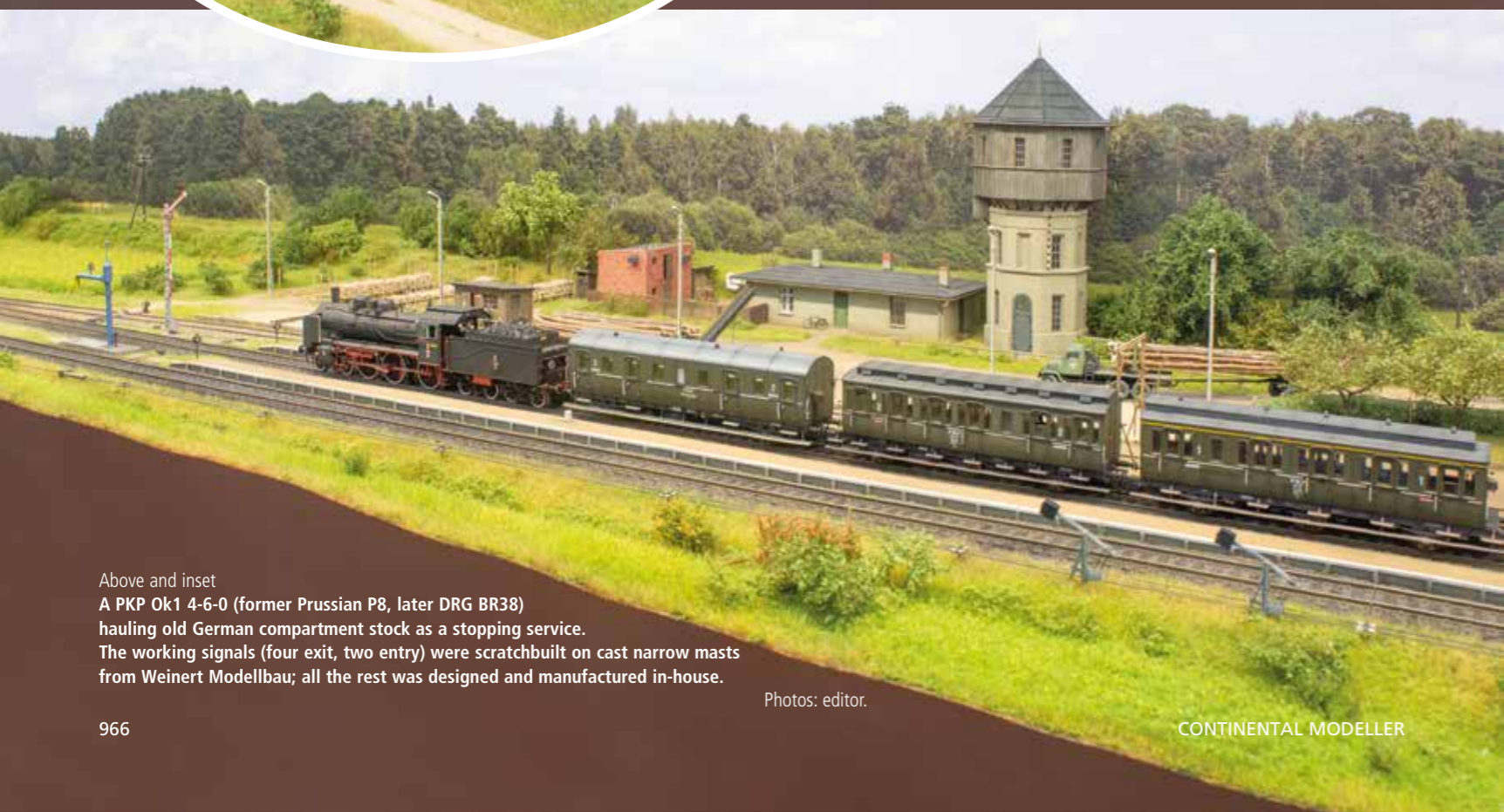
Below
Between 1965 and 1978, the PKP imported over 400 large six-axle diesel locomotives made in Romania, classified ST43. They were based on licenses from Switzerland: the diesel engine was from Sulzer, the mechanical part from SLM, and the electrical equipment from BBC. These heavy locos were used primarily on freight trains. As no passenger trains are timetabled, ST43-264 is allowed to use the main track with its freight train. The shed for general goods has no track connection and is worked with the help of a handcart.



Above
A Russian-built ST44 Co-Co diesel, one of the widely-used 'Taigatrommel' family, on a mixed goods.
Photo: editor.

Above and left
To create the natural depth effect, a flowing transition between the foreground and the backdrop was required to camouflage the angle at the division point. Not only the proportions but also the colours of the vegetation had to be precisely coordinated.

Below right
The level crossing barriers were also made from Weinert Modellbau parts, with an electric drive and integrated sound module which accompanies the movement of the barriers with a bell. Immediately to the right of the crossing is the JEG-10 barrier drive with mechanical transmission via belts. The model, an exact replica of the original, is a well-designed dummy. Photos: editor.



Above and inset
A PKP Ok1 4-6-0 (former Prussian P8, later DRG BR38) hauling old German compartment stock as a stopping service. The working signals (four exit, two entry) were scratchbuilt on cast narrow masts from Weinert Modellbau; all the rest was designed and manufactured in-house.

Photos: editor.

As well as a large amount of structure scratchbuilding, there were numerous conversions of locos, rolling stock, and road vehicles.

Construction with transport options

The complete layout had to be transportable to exhibitions. To enable efficient assembly and disassembly, a modular system made up of eight segments was created. The middle six segments are each 95cm long, the outer segments 80cm. The width varies depending on the required design of the station, with a maximum of 60cm.

10mm plywood was used for construction, drilled out in every structurally possible place to save weight. The circular





Above
There are two water cranes at Wysoka Gorzowska, fed from the water tower. The models are by Auhagen but had to be 'supercharged' – the upper part can swivel operated by a servo drive switched at the control panel.

openings have a diameter of 40mm, so the total weight of the segments could be significantly reduced. Where solid foam was used for the terrain, the frame parts could be drilled out more often.

Modular standard ends were installed on the left and right which enable the layout to be used as an operational element within larger module combinations, as the PMMH0 team regularly does.

End boards and reinforcing strips are provided for each segment to allow safe stacking in the transport vehicle.

Technology with special requirements

The layout control is based on the Arduino digital system centred on the 'Mega' board which is located in the control panel. The individual segments each contain a small 'Nano' board. A control bus with just four wires runs across all segments: plus, minus, transmitter, and receiver. Turnouts, signals, and water cranes are moved by servo drives. The Arduino system enables turnouts and signals to be interlocked just like the real railway. Of course, all of this would also be possible with analogue control, but the effort required for this seems hardly sensible. All motive power is DCC-controlled, using a Roco Z21 system with three WLAN 'mice'. It all works perfectly.

Operation with historic vehicles

Thanks to the two storage yards on the left and right, realistic point-to-point traffic can be recreated.

Since the storage yards have standard modular ends, they are not necessarily restricted to this layout and can be used in a variety of ways by the PMMH0 team.

Parallel to the creation of the layout, numerous modifications were made to the locos and rolling stock models to be used. None now corresponds to its origin as a commercial product. The consistent representation of Era IV also required the production of numerous small series models. Examples of regionally typical classes were given the running numbers of locos from the former Gorzów Wielkopolski depot.

Below
This passenger train consist reflects the history of the region: behind the loco is a standard Deutsche Reichsbahn Gesellschaft baggage van, followed by two standard DRG coaches and two former Prussian clerestory roof coaches. The last coach visible is another DRG standard.

To simulate authentic operations on this line required the steam locos of classes Ty2, Ty43, Ok1, Ol49, and Tr203 (for freight trains).

In regular passenger train service, local colour dominated – passenger coaches of Prussian origin remained in traffic for a long time. From time to time, mixed trains (Towarowo-Osobowy, or TOWOS) could also be seen, which had always existed on this route as passenger trains with freight wagons or freight trains with passenger coaches. Both these mixeds and the pure freight trains had to shunt in the station.

The modern era is represented now and again in the form of large diesel locos of classes ST44 and ST43 on freight as well as SP45 and SP46 for passenger trains.

What was true for rail vehicles also had to be implemented on the roads: to correspond to historical reality, the main things on display are custom made vehicles, most of which are based on resin castings or 3D-printing technology.



Above
The log loading area was equipped with 600mm tracks to assist the work. The carefully loaded open wagon is marked 'OPW' – it is therefore part of the eastern bloc's common wagon fleet. The responsible state forestry officer, who organises, manages, and monitors the loading of the logs, sits in front of the wooden hut.

