



## AGM 2004

Tony Priestman, Chairperson ([chairman@brickish.org](mailto:chairman@brickish.org))

Another great event passed into the Brickish Association's annals on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, when 40 or so members and guests passed a very pleasant day in each other's company at the BA AGM in Dilhorne, Staffs.

The day's events started with a Train discussion which nearly everyone attended, so it was a late start for the bacon butties. There were several competitions and events throughout the day, including the 'Giraffe Grab' – see how many Duplo giraffes you can pick up with one hand, the building race – this year with heats and a grand final. Michael LeCount's 80/20 auction was a great success, and added to the BA's coffers with the 20% part of each lot's sale price.

And of course, there was the annual general meeting itself. The full minutes should be on the website by the time you read this, but here's a brief digest:

### Chairman's report:

**Membership** – The current membership of about 140 will probably fall slightly as some people drop out, but we continue to recruit new members. My view is that an active membership is better than a large one.

**Events** – The last 12 months has seen several displays at LEGO Shops, LEGOLAND Windsor and a NBLTC train layout at the Steam museum in Swindon. Displays with the LEGO company are problematic, because of differing expectations on each side, whereas displays at non-LEGO venues are a lot more rewarding. Trying to organise an independent exhibition might be a bit beyond us yet, though. Last year's Christmas party at LLW was a great success, and we have already provisionally booked the same Saturday (the 4<sup>th</sup> of December) for this year.

**Location of AGM** – All attendees agreed that the hall at Dilhorne is a fantastic venue, but to ensure that

everyone has an event local to them every so often, the AGM will be moved around the country every couple of years or so. It is hoped to hold next year's AGM somewhere south of Birmingham and north of London, assuming that someone steps forward with a viable venue and they can take on a lot of the hosting duties.

**Bulk bricks** – Last year's frustrating initial adventures in this area met with little success. However, we were more successful at the Christmas party, when a limited selection of bricks was available for £11 a kilo, subject to a reselling embargo. The arrival of the Pick-a-Brick shop at LLW may be helpful, as initial discussions about bulk purchases have already taken place.

**Relationship with The LEGO Company** – This is currently stalled due to staff changes at LEGO Direct, but I will contact the new LEGO Club representative, who has been our point of contact in the past.

### Treasurer's Report

The treasurer, Michael LeCount, advised that the association's funds were healthy enough for us to support some BA member organised events, and the guidelines for what could be considered would be available by the end of May.

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Moonbase discussions at the AGM

Photo Yvonne Doyle

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## Editor's letter

Well a lot has happened since the last Brick Issue. The AGM sounds like it was an outstanding success, unfortunately I missed it. Plus two public shows already this year. Piece-by-piece, see article on page 6, and GWLTS-II. As GWLTS is my "baby" I'd like to take the liberty of spending a few words on it. This was the second time that we have put on a LEGO train display at the Steam Museum in Swindon. This year we had two layouts, an 8mm/1ft layout from Mark Bellis and an expanded NBLTC layout, which was 30' plus long. At one point eight trains were running! Once again we got in the paper and we must be doing something right as the Museum has asked us back next year.

I hope you enjoy this Brick Issue which includes a couple of new contributors, thank you David and Justin, as well as the regulars. If you would like to contribute an article please contact me.

Regards Mark Palmer, Editor [newsletter@brickish.org](mailto:newsletter@brickish.org)

## News in Brief

- **The first edition of the new members' FAQ is now in place on the website.** This initial version includes answers to a lot of questions that have been asked, but it will evolve as more come to light. If you think that there's something obvious missing, please let us know!
- **Brickish on the Beeb again.** BA chairman Tony Priestman was interviewed for BBC Radio 4's 'You and Yours' programme in January. In the event, he managed '15 seconds of fame' in an article about the direction the LEGO company is taking.
- **Great offer from Busy Bee.** 25% off! Following a successful trip to the AGM, Busy Bee will be running a one-off offer of 25% off everything in the current catalogue for a two week period at the beginning of June. There are some conditions attached to the offer, please see the news item on the website for the full details.
- **Piece-By-Piece South Hants event.** 2004's first gathering of AFOLs in the UK was organised by William Howard in Petersfield, Hants on the 21st of February. Pictures are available on the website..
- **GWLTS-II.** The second Great Western LEGO Train Show, also held on the 21st February 2004, was a huge success with two working layouts and up to eight trains moving simultaneously. Pictures from this event are also available on the website..
- **Let other members know which events you'll be attending an event.** A facility that you can use to let others know which events you'll be at has been introduced to the website. On the members and discussions home pages you'll see the event list now has a "I'm attending" check box under each event.

## Getting Started with LEGO Trains: By Jake McKee

Reviewed By David Graham

One of my colleagues once said we would know we had produced a good product when some else wrote a beginners guide to it. Therefore the appearance of this book shows that LEGO trains have 'made it'. The book though is not written by an outsider but by Jake McKee the LEGO community development manager for North America.

Most of the book is taken up with the description of three LEGO train projects - all are American designs, a modern North American style locomotive, a 1940's refrigerator car, and a modern intermodal container car. Full step-by-step instructions are given of a similar quality found in LEGO sets. The part I found the most interesting was the introduction to each model where Jake describes the design process. Working from pictures of the real thing to decide on the overall dimensions and proportions, to the design of the major components then a description of the design and detailing. I found his thoughts on detailing are suitable to any LEGO model and I have already put them into practice on my Moon Base module. He describes various LEGO terms - SNOT design, the Half-Stud trick and crossing the lines.

The other short chapters are - an introduction with a brief history of LEGO trains, an overview of the sets currently available, train building basics, track layouts, with appendixes on railroad terminology and where to buy LEGO trains - i.e. the internet. Included are interviews with James Mathis, Steve Barile and Dan Parker on building LEGO trains and layouts. These chapters are, as the title suggests, an introduction and are designed for the person starting with their first LEGO train.

As he works for LEGO I read the text closely to see if there was any insight into the future of LEGO trains. On the description of the straight track he said "...as of the time of writing there is only one type of straight track..." is he suggesting that in the future there could be there short of long tracks? On Curved track he says, "...it has a fairly sharp radius, which makes for a pretty sharp turn...".

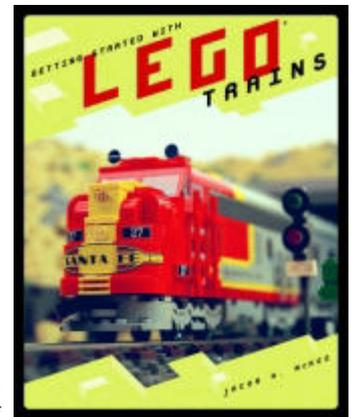
As most of the book is taken up with the three design project the amount of information on LEGO trains is limited. I kept on thinking of what was missed out. On the history section a picture of a 4.5v and 12v train and track would have helped the explanation. His review of the current range omitted any reference to buildings, the engine shed should have been included.

6-wide versus 8-wide is mentioned but all the designs are 6-wide, it is an introduction. He describes the available train base plates but just mentions 6x24 stud and upwards and does not say that 6x16 plates can be used, personally I like small trains. The section on track layouts appeared to have come from straight from Matt Bate's Train Depot (as could most of the book). Matt's Track Designer program doesn't get a mention. I expected a section on 'where to go next' with a few pictures of club layouts showing what could be done. I suppose he couldn't include everything.

He refers in places to the website that accompanies the book, [www.bricksonthebrain.com/train](http://www.bricksonthebrain.com/train), at present it contains mainly links to other sites, but it is to be developed and will a list all the pieces need to build the three train projects described.

Overall it is a very interesting book especially learning about how he designs his trains and adds details. I especially liked the Old Style Refrigerator Car. I'm not sure if a beginner will buy it, an enthusiast will know most of it already but there is still a lot to learn and not just for people who are into LEGO trains.

Available from Amazon.co.uk £10.49 + P&P  
ISBN 1-59327-006-2



## How Do You Store LEGO?

By Justin Watkins (AFOL), Logistics Manager, Mercy Ships UK

Storage is a problem. You can never find the important pieces fast enough. You always have too many of a particular piece in the wrong colour. And you hate tidying up.

A long time ago, my parents purchased five storage boxes made by Lego (picture 1).



We sorted by colour, and rummaging frantically. Sometimes it was easier to tip the contents on the floor. Storage was a matter of throwing it all in the boxes at the end of the day. For many people, this is as far as a "storage system" goes.

The early Technic set boxes sparked new ideas for storage. They had lots of useful little compartments 4 studs and 6 studs long. I started sorting by type. But while stacking my collection away under the bed one Sunday evening, the box with all the small special Technic parts tipped over and the contents spilled unsorted over the carpet in a most dark, dusty and inaccessible place. Was it really worth it?

I do not have the luxury of a dedicated construction area. I have negotiated a shelf in the wardrobe, and a tidy stack in a corner. Homebase sells a range of plastic toolboxes and organisers manufactured by Zag under the "Stanley" brand, which are fantastic for storing Lego, form a neat stack (picture 2), they are the right colours, and most importantly the small compartments are a perfect fit for anything 4 or 6 studs long (picture 3).

The trick is to know what to store in the organisers and what to store elsewhere. I have many hundreds of some small Technic parts, but rarely need more than a dozen. Enter the famous A5 Ziplock bags and two large under-bed crates. In theory, the crates contain the parts I rarely use.

I say "in theory", because any storage system is always in a state of flux (this applies generally to logistics, not

just to Lego). The crate under the bed contains part-built models and some important bits that I need a lot. So even with my near-perfect storage system I end up doing a lot of rummaging. I have a terrible feeling that I have already spent more time in my life sorting out my Lego than actually building, and perhaps more money on storage than I should have done.

Other people have different ways of storing their Lego. Children don't see the benefit of sorting (or tidying up), so a rummaging store works best for them. At the other end of the scale are people who have the luxury of a dedicated room with a workbench. They have permanent storage at the back of their workbench using the space vertically.

In conclusion, I would like to argue that storage should not be perfect. It only has to be "good enough for the purpose", which for a A.F.O.L. means maximising building time, maximising budget for real Lego bricks, and frequently making do with a stack of Tupperware boxes stolen from the kitchen.

Photos by author.



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# The Rise of Blacktron.

By Peter Reid

## An age of innovation

"Classic Space", the affectionate name for the early days of humanity's expansion from Terra, represents mankind's greatest period of scientific and social advancement. Under the auspices of "The Corporation", and their noble symbol, mankind at last had the freedom to travel far beyond the crowded home system.

The development of the transwarp drive led to the mass production of interstellar spacecraft. Ships like LL928 were sent out deeper and deeper into unknown space. Command centres and sprawling colonies were established on hundreds of remote worlds.

Working towards a shared vision, violence was almost unknown; the occasional conflicts among grades or professional castes were simply the inevitable result of people working closely together for long periods. But for many glorious years there was pervasive peace, an interstellar brotherhood. Even the emergence of Futuron, with their improved space suit technology, was met with a wide smile and a cheery wave by the old guard, who were quickly made to feel like relics alongside the new astronauts. Futuron continued to build on the success of the earlier pioneers, with their new Monorails and Robo-Probe Transporter technology soon in place on most of the inhabited worlds out there..

Few guessed that those sweet, profitable days were approaching a violent end - a deadly shadow was about to be cast across the galaxy, and anyone who gazed into its darkness would be lost.

## The Shadow Falls

It was somewhere around the late 23<sup>rd</sup> century. The details of the first savage attacks are patchy at best; only a handful of Corporation personnel survived the mass slaughters of the initial wave. Those unfortunates who did survive were half dead, drooling idiots, driven mad by their brush with evil. Most of the survivors had strange geometric symbols carved into their faces or onto their bodies ... the soon to be infamous quadruple triangle. This symbol of the galaxy's greatest evil was to become an emblem of fear to millions, made all the more horrific by of the condition of those who had survived these horrendous attacks. Those who made it back to allied space could utter just one word ... repeating it endlessly until they willingly succumbed to death's sweet embrace ...

... "Blacktron"

## A Black Wave of Bloody Death

There was no doubting their malign intent from the very first. Their sinister vessels bristling with weaponry; their vile troops clad in nightmarish uniforms – they were seemingly designed to paralyse their opponents with fear. The Corporation scientists and technicians stood little chance against these barbarians - most Futuron vehicles and installations had been built for peaceful purposes; what use were meteor shields in the face of such a

savage barrage? The Blacktron, it seemed, had no interest in science for its own sake, or for any greater good. They killed simply to ease the process of acquisition. And then they killed some more.

Every Blacktron vehicle had a sinister, hard appearance. The outer chitin-like plating was incredibly tough, seemingly unbreachable, the pilots safe inside their all-conquering war machines.

The Blacktron themselves were perhaps the most frightening thing. Enveloped in black encounter suits, their torsos bristled with an inhuman array of pipes and life support apparatus, giving no hint as to the vileness beneath. Their polarised visors ensured that nobody saw their faces and lived. Imagine the fear these inhuman soldiers would cause in the innocent colonists as the brutal militia swept through the command centres and took what they wanted. When they came, it was like a black tide of death. Bloody, bloody death.

Terran boffins attempted to gain some insight into the Blacktron menace. Rumours were rife. Were they aliens? Robots that walked like men? What did they want? The answer, when it finally came, was more terrible than anyone could have imagined. They were us - underneath it all they were merely human. And they wanted everything.

It was 1989, in the golden age of LEGO, a time when all minifigs smiled (this might provoke some discussion with Castle fans as to which theme had the first non-smiley minifigs - ED). It would be another three years before the first mustachioed minifigs shocked a generation with their flamboyant facial growth. It was a bitter shock when the

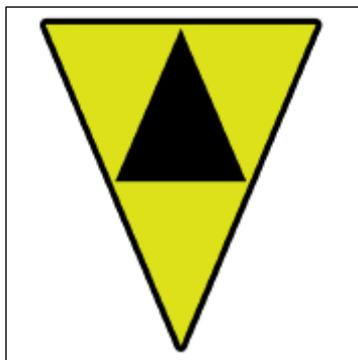
Blacktron visors were lifted, seeing the smiling visage of a human being. But this was the rictus grin of a genetically enhanced warmonger, pumped full of horrifying drug cocktails, to make the slaughter less of a chore.

There was an advert on telly for the Blacktron range which aired in the late 80's. Many of you may remember it (or may have seen it on the Brickish website, thanks to Chris Salt).

*A heavily armed Blacktron Invader flies through rocky canyons on an alien planet, in pursuit of a Futuron astronaut*

*piloting a tiny craft. The difference in ship size means the smaller craft is struggling, yet fair play obviously means nothing to the Invader pilot. We see the attacker's point of view as he closes on his prey, flying over a Alienator, which stands atop a ridge like a malevolent sentinel. It is clear the yellow spaceman has little chance of survival. They are everywhere. Yet, in the face of peril, he is brave. "You Blacktrons'll never get me", he shouts, snatching a backward glance. That tiny movement is enough to scupper his escape, and the spaceman turns back - in time to see a sheer rock rapidly looming. The tiny ship crashes and is smashed to pieces.*

The final line seems a bit of a cop out...the Blacktron guy taps the Futuron guy on the shoulder and says, 'Tag, you're it', before running off in what appears to be an intergalactic version of an old playground favourite. It was obviously a last minute attempt by LEGO to make



light of the Blacktron range, to play down the blatantly evil nature of these toys. Propaganda, to cheat the Blacktrons of the fear they were rightly due - as a child, I wasn't fooled for a second, and proceeded to use the Blacktron for their intended purpose.

They were the meanest 'blighters' ever, and I shall always love them.

And these days my love remains strong...I'm currently involved in a collaborative project with several fellow Blacktron commanders. It is our evil dream to hold an united parade one day, our forces combined. Picture, if you dare, regiments of soldiers, waves of the classic vehicles, a robot death squad, elite guards and some truly glorious original models.

Hold that image, for darkness comes again ...

*Blacktron Cells infest the galaxy, each one an isolated army, a totally self-contained and self-sufficient force. Although they share a common technology base - all use the basic Alienator, Invader and Battrax designs - each is free to innovate in the name of efficient acquisition.*

*Another shared asset is the distinctive encounter suits, worn by Blacktron warriors across the galaxy. While some Cells are little more than security teams for paranoid millionaires on remote planets, others are huge, privately funded defence forces employing thousands of conscripted soldiers. Although distrustful of one another, their divergent development has led to an intense curiosity among Cells. From time to time, when the opportunity arises, Blacktron Commanders arrange to meet on far flung moons in untravelled systems. These gatherings are arranged on the secret Blacktron communication frequency - DarkNet.*



**Alienator (6876)**

One of the most iconic symbols of Blacktron superiority, the Alienator is a four legged all terrain armoured vehicle. The standard model seats a single pilot, who is bio-bonded to the machine. The Alienator provides excellent pilot protection (though not from the sides), and has an impressive array of offensive weapons built into its compact chassis. The rear section provides storage space for a remote computer uplink, as well as a selec-

tion of standard tools. Should the main body become damaged, the cockpit section can detach and return to a safe haven away from the battlefield.

**Invader (6894)**

Despite its age, the Invader remains popular throughout Blacktron settlements, due in no small part to its versatility. Invaders can be used as transport ships, attack cruisers, or specialised field support craft. They can also travel remarkable distances between systems, an impressive feat considering the small size of the ship. The standard Invader seats a single pilot, and is shipped with a standard utility robot in the hold. The ship is capable of reconfiguring, and a popular variant of the machine features a bigger central cargo bay. And a better robot.



**Battrax (6941)**

A leviathan of the Blacktron ground force, these noisy, wheeled tanks are capable of fast travel over difficult terrain. Although usually configured with a single seat, but are easily field-configured to seat two crew in the cockpit section. The main engine is powered by fossil fuel combustion, and as a result the Battrax is a noisy, smoke belching war wagon. The front and rear sections can detach and combine into a light attack craft. Tactically, the Battrax can prove invaluable on the battlefield, when fielded with a regiment of Alienators. Its speed, shielded armour and firepower make the Battrax a fearsome presence during Blacktron ground assault.



**Azriel – Dark Mechanoid**

Created by Dr Kezia on Oberon IV, Azriel is the latest hi-tech battle robot to join the dark forces of the Blacktron. He is an one off design, and has been lovingly crafted to operate alongside the very latest evil drones.

Images from <http://www.brickset.com>

## Lessons of a LEGO Show

By William Howard

This article discusses some of the issues addressed while organising the Piece-by-Piece South Hants Lego show. It is not meant to be a blue-print for event organisation, as with any planning you have to adapt to situations and circumstances, but I hope it will encourage others to “have a go” by covering the more salient points.

Having decided to organise a Lego event the next decision is “Will the event be a private gathering of like minded individuals or a display open to the general public?” (I will use the term “Fest” for a private gathering and “Show” for a public display – although the terms are clearly interchangeable.) I had decided on a public show, and this article will therefore address items more relevant to a show than a fest, which was admirably covered by David Graham’s article in BI-4.

**Venue** – You will probably have a choice of possible venues, including scout huts, church halls, community centres, hotel rooms, public halls, schools, etc. Keep it local as you will be the first to arrive and the last to leave. Questions that will affect your choice of venue are: Is there adequate parking – both for exhibitors and visitors? Is it easy to load and unload large models? (Stairs should be avoided!) Is public transport handy? How far will locals have to go out of their way to visit? Are there adequate facilities (toilets, kitchen, etc)? Are the available rooms a suitable shape and size? Be critical. Will members of the public make the effort to get to your show venue?

**Exhibits** – How many exhibits (including sellers) are you aiming for? Solicit tentative agreement to attend from key exhibitors before booking the venue and deciding on a date. Exhibitors may have other commitments that you need to work around. Be critical. Will the exhibits form an interesting show that the public will enjoy attending?

**When** – Possible dates for the show will almost certainly be restricted by other bookings of the venue. Take a “straw poll” to ascertain interest in the LEGO Community for certain days/dates. Sundays may be easier to book, but will there will be less “passing trade” from local shoppers? Also public transport is less frequent on a Sunday so it may deter exhibitors who have to travel via it. Decide what hours the show will be open. Over lunch time on a Saturday worked well for Piece-by-Piece as we were visited by shoppers “popping in” on their way home and by visitors coming specifically to the show after lunch – this was by design. Once selected the opening hours allow an extra 2 to 3 hours for setting up before opening the doors open and 2 hours for striking down afterwards. You may also want additional time for club activities or meetings or just general socialising.

**Layout** – Don’t just assume everything will fit. Empty rooms tend to look bigger than they are and for some perverse reason tables seem to occupy less space in isolation than in groups. Don’t guess. Take a tape and measure the room. Draw a rough plan and mark in doors (especially fire exits), windows, radiators, power points, and other salient features. Piece-by-Piece had a large mobile stage to contend with. Measure the tables, making note of any raised edging strips. Count the available tables and chairs. Are there sufficient numbers? Are there too many, and if so where will they be stored during the show to be out of the way? Sketch a rough layout of the exhibits and the tables (or modules) that will be required. Don’t forget that train layouts will need



to be near power sockets while monorails do not. Sellers (and some displays) will need rear access to the tables. Allow sufficient room for exhibitors to sit behind tables near walls and enough room for people to pass easily around tables in the centre of the room. (At Piece-by-Piece I allowed 0.75m behind tables and 1.50m between tables, these figures were obtained by arranging tables and chairs at home so that they were comfortable and then getting the ruler out!) If the exhibits won’t comfortably fit, don’t squeeze them in hoping it will work out, find a bigger room or reduce the number of exhibits. Be critical with your proposed layout. Will the layout and (remaining) exhibits form an interesting show that the public will remember for the right reasons?

Choosing a venue, room and date and determining who can attend and hence the show layout is an iterative process. For Piece-by-Piece I had a choice of four venues in the town. One of them has a huge hall with plenty of parking and was available on almost any weekend. However, it is located on the far side of town to the shops and would therefore not be subject to “passing trade”. When booking a venue find out who else uses it and if it is excessively vacant ask yourself why. One of the other venues is ideally situated and frequently used for public events. The owners know this and charge accordingly for hall hire! Facilities determined the choice between the remaining two venues, and although the one finally chosen was more expensive to hire, this was reflected in the state of maintenance throughout the building. It is not just the Lego that visitors will remember but also the surroundings!

Once the venue has been booked the show needs to be announced and further issues addressed

**Advertising** – There are any number of ways to advertise an event – local newspaper “What’s On” listings (usually free), posters on public notice boards, on school notice boards, in local shops, et al, Internet discussion forums such as Lugnet, Brickish, FBTB et al, adverts in specialised magazines, word of mouth, etc. Timing is important. Make sure you have “copy” to newspapers and magazines by due dates but don’t advertise too soon before the event or people will forget. With posters, try to get them all up at the same time to make the biggest impact. Don’t put up posters too soon or the impact will be lost, but too late and people will have other arrangements for the day. (Piece-by-Piece was on the last

weekend of half term so everything had to be done a week earlier than I would have liked to allow for people being on holiday the first weekend.) For Internet announcements it is important to keep them active. Updates with calls for individual models and for contributions to group projects will help to get more people involved and interested. Post additional information on types of exhibits and sellers. Tease your audience! (So even if you have everything planned on Day 1 don't post all the details in one go or you'll have nothing left for future posts!) Try to get other exhibitors to post to the threads as it will allay fears of "I'm going to be the only other person there". Internet postings should get more frequent as the date arrives to give the feeling that the show is gathering momentum and will be "the" event to attend.

**Catering** – Aim to at least provide beverages for the exhibitors, although you may want to provide snacks. (For Piece-by-Piece I brought tea, coffee and squash as the high street is only a five minute walk away with a choice of bakeries, snack-bars and cafes.) Ascertain if the venue has kettles, cups, spoons, etc and if you will need to take washing-up items.

**Exhibit Planning** – No one person can do everything to make the show run smoothly and one of the easiest tasks to delegate is the arrangement of a display area (e.g. space, trains, brick-wars, castle, etc). Getting two or three friends to look after one specific display area each, will reduce your stress and increase your enjoyment of both organising and attending the show.

Organising an area can be as simple as trying to get firm commitments from people to attend and a rough idea of what size area will actually be required (what I call the MosLego approach), to a full blown plan of who is bringing what and where it goes (what I call the NBLTC module approach). Just because a task is delegated doesn't mean that you, as the show organiser, can ignore it. Its success is still your responsibility, so ensure that you know what is happening within the area and that it will fit into the overall scheme.

**Setting-Up** – If everything is going to plan, setting up will be the painless task (that it was at Piece-by-Piece) where people just get down to their areas and make it happen. Obviously the first order of the day is to get the tables (and modules) placed in the required layout. If using multiple tables for a display it may be prudent to tie the legs together. Cable ties are excellent for this, but don't forget the wire cutters! When all is set up, or at least before the public are admitted if the setting up is over-running, do a quick check to remove things such as empty bags, cups of cold coffee, tools, purchases, et al (I forget to do this at Piece-by-Piece which is why you'll see some of these "eye-sores" in the photographs.) Don't forget to place "Do not touch" and "Hazard" signs around the venue, both in the show area and the entrance(s). "Exhibitor Only" signs may be useful on "private" doors (e.g. to the kitchen). Other signs showing where the toilets are, or that information sheets are

available, or that a raffle is taking place all add to the "professionalism" of the show.

**Striking-Down** – Stick to your closing time, especially if you have to be gone by a fixed time if someone else is in the room after you. In that case have a contingency. Can tables be picked up and moved to another area/room to enable delicate models to be packed safely? Make sure the room and other areas are tidy when everyone else has gone by doing a final "sweep". Are there any loose parts on the floor? (I found 4 but nothing of value.) Are the cups back in the cupboard? Are the tables and chairs stacked where you found them? Are the electric sockets off? Are the lights out and the rooms locked? You would not believe the number of minor things that hall owners deduct from deposits!

And if all went according to your well laid plans you organised a well attended show which was an enjoyable experience for all including yourself!

The one final point I would like to address is how to fund a show.

**Cost Recovery** – Hall hire, advertising, catering, etc will all (most likely) incur costs. So how are these costs to be met? The organiser(s) could meet the costs themselves. The costs may be covered by an organisation. Local sponsors may meet the costs. An entrance fee could be charged. (If so, how much? How will it be collected? Who will collect it? Will it apply to exhibitors? How will re-entry be handled? Will it put people off "just dropping in"?) A levy could be raised on sellers. (If so, how much? Will it apply to all sellers, both casual and dedicated? Will it apply to



trades? Will it deter sellers? Will sellers expect a certain volume of sales?) A raffle could be run. (If so, where do the prizes come from? How much are the tickets? Who will sell the tickets?) (Important note: Raffles are now covered in England and Wales by the Lottery Law and usually have to be registered and strict procedures followed. However, raffles run during an event, strictly for that event, are exempt from the regulations if a few basic rules are adhered to. I have various Internet references if anyone needs further details.)

I have strongly held views on entrance fees and seller levies and decided that the "impact" of these on attendance numbers and "bad feeling" that may be engendered outweighed the gains so I decided to initially fund Piece-by-Piece myself and hold a raffle to offset those costs. The raffle prizes were obtained well below retail price from shop sales and by donation. Although Piece-by-Piece ended up making a loss, the amount was similar to what I would expect to pay if I had traveled to another event.

Organising a show is a challenge, but with an amount of planning it need not be overwhelming. It is also immensely enjoyable, and you get to display your own models in the way you want!

Photographs James Stacey & Rhys Knight

