

Collaboration

Tony Priestman, Chairperson (chairman@brickish.org)

Someone said to me recently that they were getting a bit fed up with all the collaborative projects which are run via the BA website. I have some sympathy with him. It seems to me that there is very little collaboration: just a lot of rules so that everyone can still do their own thing in isolation, but should it ever come into contact with someone else's they should fit together.

I don't like lots of rules. It seems like a good way to stifle imagination, but I can't really see it encouraging collaboration. More likely the opposite, as people become alienated by being forced in directions they don't like.

Perhaps we need to develop some true collaborations, where a group of enthusiasts actually works as a group on a single project.

I keep on banging on about local groups, and nothing much seems to happen. If a group of members were all working on the same project, there would be a reason for meeting, and it could be expanded beyond the project into other areas. It doesn't have to be a big group: I'm in the

middle of designing a large building complex with another person, and the two of us will probably have something to show for it by the middle of next year. But we're having a lot of fun along the way.

There are plenty of opportunities for things like this. The GWLTS train layout at the Steam museum in Swindon is another example, and perhaps a moonbase 'super-module' could be something else for a small group to work on. Whatever it is: get imaginative, get inspired and get together!

NEWS

Association member in the news

Brickish Association member Mark Nash was interviewed by the Western Mail newspaper following LEGO being voted the favourite toy among adults in a recent poll.

New Committee Member

Simon Bennett has become the third co-opted committee member. Simon will have no responsibilities as far as the Brickish Association is concerned, but his role as the curator of the UK

pages at www.lugnet.com may lead to further synergistic benefits to AFOLs in the UK.

Brickish Association member featured in LEGOLife, the company's in-house newspaper

Association Member Huw Millington was recently invited to Billund and, among other things, was allowed into 'the vault', the company's archive of sets.

Membership expiries and website access

On the 31st of August, membership expiry date checking was turned on. This means that if your subs are overdue you won't be able to log in to the website.

The brickish.org domain is back again!

The www.brickish.org domain has now been renewed for nine years, so it will remain as a point of contact and reference for UK AFOLs for the foreseeable future.

The additional domains, www.brickish.com and www.brickish.co.uk, also point at the Brickish website.

More details of these stories can be found in the Brickish website news archive.



Airplane at LEGOLAND Billund airport
Photograph by Huw Millington

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SN4 8LL

Editor's letter

Apologies, again, for the late arrival of this issue of The Brick Issue. Real life just keeps getting in the way. You will have to excuse me a little bit this issue for a certain amount of self-indulgence, with two pages dedicated to me. This isn't because I particularly think that my contributions are better than anybody else's but as a need to fill space! I need contributions from you to keep The Brick Issue interesting. Although having said that I hope you find my contributions useful and inspiring. Let's see more "town" building.

The 5MM represents a change of direction both into Space (Star Wars) and also a continuation of a LEGO line. A great model from Richard James.

If you would like to contribute an article please contact me.

Regards Mark Palmer, Editor newsletter@brickish.org

San Diego Comic Con, July 2004

By James Bacon

I was lucky enough to get taken out to San Diego comic con, to help a business friend.

I am a bit of a comic's fan, and this is truly the Mecca in the comic's scene, but San Diego is as much a Toys, Movies and Merchandise event as it is a comic's convention. For instance Lucasfilm launched Revenge of The Sith over the weekend. At the launch, immediately after the announcement fans were urged to buy T-Shirts.

Being an AFOL I was keen to see what the Danish maestros would be doing at this prime event. Now I admit it's not a toy show, nor is it coming up to Christmas, but with 80,000 people through the doors, I was expecting a serious LEGO presence.

There was a decent Bionicle stand, there were a number of displays, a Giant Bionicle and the creators from The Bionicle comic doing singings of free comics and free posters. There was no shortage of Bionicle figures to buy, they had a large video screen, cash point, T-Shirts and other accessories, the whole lot. It was spacious and packed with kids. I was impressed, and the stand was topped off with Massive POS towering above. Apparently there was meant to be a video available, but it wasn't.

Onwards I went after this I had high hopes for the other Science Fiction related LEGO.

LEGO had a tiny section within the Lucas Film pavilion for there Star Wars range. To be honest, the whole Lucas Film area was a shambles and it was terribly laid out, with all the different manufacturers higgildy piggildy.

Even so the LEGO section, was pitiful, to say the least, our local Toy hop does a better job here in Dublin.

A young lady dressed up as Princess Leia in the slave Girl costume immediately caught my eye, and she was very good looking, although she was in civvies

on Sunday and was somehow more attractive, laying blow to those boyhood fantasies.

They had one Game console playing a forthcoming Star Wars LEGO game. It's your usual platform type of thing, and there was some interest and a queue to play it.

There were only two display cabinets. The first was filled with the new Star Wars models, including the Tie Fighter set, which does seem very affordable and the other cabinet with a small Endor diorama. There was a LEGO Darth Vader, and a R2-D2. There were LEGO pens for sale and Free Mini Tie fighters.

That was it. Like that was it. No LEGO for sale, no huge diorama's, no Harry Potter, no Spiderman, just disappointment.

I couldn't believe it that here at one of the largest Sci-Fi event's in the world, LEGO had such a small presence, and they wonder why they are dropping in sales, when the console manufacturers had tons of space at the same event.

A missed opportunity I reckon.



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The red brick sighted hovering over the White Horse at Sutton Bank, North Yorkshire



The brick seen earlier over the town of Thirsk.

These amazing pictures from the now infamous incident have recently been received by our staff reporter. No one has been able to adequately explain how an enormous red brick came to be floating over Northern England, apparently guided by a superior intelligence, before disappearing as mysteriously as it appeared.

Identity Crisis

Some observers reported hearing a strange sound coming from the "brick" that they described as "duploduploduplo...", while others were convinced that the sound was more obscure and sounded like "exploreeexploree...".

Article submitted by Phil Travis

Art-Deco

By Mark Palmer

Inspiration

I've always liked Art-Deco architecture and thought it would be a good subject for LEGO buildings. As well as being a change from trains, space, or castle. The inspiration for this particular building came from several sources, primarily from Napier in New Zealand an Art-Deco town, but also buildings in Brentford and the more generic Art-Deco theatres and cinemas such as the Hammersmith Odeon. This is not a copy of any one building but includes adaptations of many buildings in one.

Design

I'm not an user of LDraw to design my MOCs, or even drawing any real plans as such. I tend to start with an idea, make a few sketches, sometimes with estimations of dimensions. The MOC then just organically develops. I tend to do a lot of test builds of features, e.g., the windows, and then re-work into the building. This does lead to quite a few frustrating re-builds when I decide that a feature doesn't work. I also tend to work around the parts and or colours I have rather than source parts for a design.

I wanted to build in low-relief to make the building more manageable, take up less space and be easier to transport. While building I ended up with a modular approach, a centre section with separate "wings", which led to the Modular Town Street (MTS) specification. There is a lot of half-stud offset used which leads to the name of "The Offset Building".



The Offset Building (TOB)

The major features of TOB are the bay-window and the entrance, around which the building was designed.

Entrance

The entrance uses columns of transparent 1x1 round bricks to form a curve using 1x2 jumpers to form a tighter curve. Each curve is illuminated behind with a standard 1x2 (train) lighting brick. Pearl-gray tiles are used to give a marble like look to the floor.

Bay window

This, the main feature, took up the most design time. The bay is at 45 degrees and uses 1x2 plate hinges to form the triangle. The bay is seven studs wide which as it is centred means that the wall has to be offset by half a stud behind pillars. This leads to problems when constructing the roof. See building tips for more information on bay-windows.

SNOT roof tiles

The roof tiles either side of the bay-window and above the side windows use "bracket 1x2 -

2x2" and 1x2 hinge bricks respectively.

Window panes

This could be considered an "illegal move" but no LEGO pieces were harmed! The panes are pieces of overhead projector film with the window frames printed on them cut to size and sandwiched between the LEGO window pane and the frame. This is an easy way to both improve a building and confuse a few members!



SNOT windows

I wanted to have short wide windows and no standard LEGO windows fitted the bill so I hit on the idea of using 4x5 windows on their side. They are held in place with 1x2 Technic bricks using Technic pin with peg at one end and 1x1 plates at the other. Just to add to the fun they are set back half a stud. Height is equal to 4.1 bricks including one plate below the windows and two above. Width is 20 studs for four windows plus four plates and one plate at the "top" of the windows.



Photographs by Mark Palmer



TOB logo

This took about three hours to design! The basic design of a 1x2 jumper plate on top of two more jumper plates is easy, mounting it vertically wasn't. Eventually I ended up with a 4x4 plate (actually 2 2x4

plates) attached to two Technic "pin with peg" (a very useful part that I need more of) mounted five plates apart (vertically).

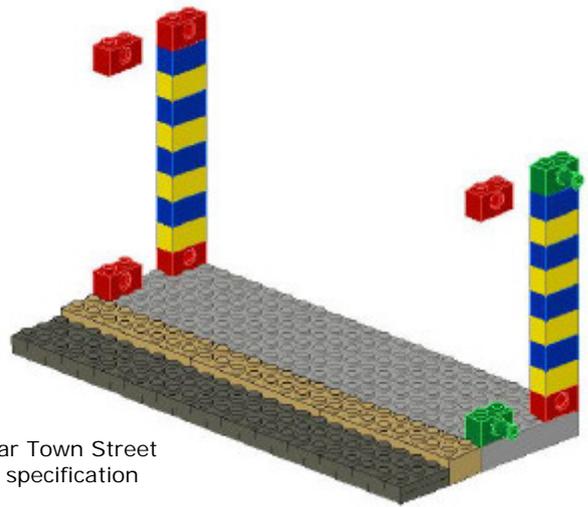
Modular Town Street (MTS)

This is a specification for low relief buildings that can be built by different people and assembled into a street. The specification sets parameters such as depth, fixing (by Technic peg) and pavement, (see specification diagram).

Conclusion

That's about it, I had great fun developing it and discovered a lot of techniques that will, and have, be used in other buildings.

In my (humble) opinion the "jumper" plate is one of the most versatile LEGO pieces, although I probably went



Modular Town Street (MTS) specification

overboard with the use of half-stud offset but I like it. I know that others don't share my enthusiasm for the jumper plate but each to their own! The MTS was also a by-product of this building.

I hope you like it and that it will inspire some more MTS modules and "town" buildings in general.

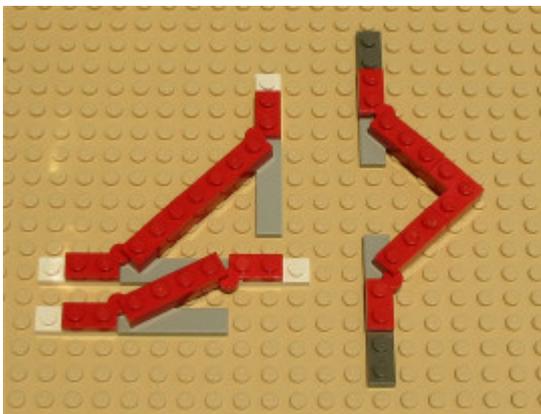
Building Tips - SNARL

By Mark Palmer

Studs Not At Right angle (SNARL) OK, so it's a lousy acronym but, hey, it made me smile! So, what is SNARL? It's a development of SNOT (Studs Not On Top) but unlike SNOT the studs remain in the same plane as normal but are not lined up normally. I don't claim any originality in this, except maybe the acronym, as examples of the technique can be found in many MOCs on the web.

LEGO does provide some SNARL parts, e.g. the castle wall BURP's, but they tend not to be very versatile. Typically SNARL techniques will use hinge plates, but equally can use normal bricks or plates. The use of tiles is, typically, necessary to allow the rotation of the SNARL (e.g. 'hinge' plate) part of the model.

The maths: Inevitably there are combinations that work and those that don't. I'm sure you could work it all out but I prefer to sit down with a pile of parts and work it out with trial and error. The basics are outer and inner angles, everything else is a variation on that. The basic permutations are shown below. Think triangles of either 5x3 studs or 5x5 studs.



Applications: Uses for SNARL can be found in all "themes". So far I've concentrated on town/architecture. Building angled protrusions on buildings adds to an "Art-Deco" feel, see "the Offset Building". Bay windows add character to houses or shops, and inside angles can be used for corner buildings or entrances. For space I can see possibilities for gun ports or observation windows etc. In castle SNARL could be used for walls, turrets etc. In addition vertical SNARL (V-SNARL :-)) could be used for sloping walls, hulls etc. This would be a good use for click-hinges.

Conclusion: LEGO geometry never ceases to amaze me. Play around with a few hinge plates and see what lines up, particularly if you throw in some half-stud offset techniques.

Go on give it a try, let's break up some of those rectangular boxes!



Photographs, Huw Millington and Mark Palmer

LEGOLAND Billund.

By Huw Millington

In this, the second of two articles on European LEGOLANDs, I provide information on visiting the park at the home of LEGO, in Billund, Denmark.

Where is it?

LEGOLAND Billund is in Jutland, which is the part of Denmark attached to mainland Europe, to the north of Germany. It's about 60 miles north of the German border, and 150 miles west of Copenhagen.

How to get there

While an overland trip of 600 miles via Calais it certainly possible, most visitors arrive in Jutland via car ferry from Harwich to Esbjerg, (about 30 miles from Billund) or by air to Billund airport from Gatwick (Maersk Air) or Manchester (BA). If you plan far enough ahead, flights from Gatwick can be obtained for about £14 single, plus taxes. The park is about two miles from the airport terminal, so while it can be walked, a taxi is advisable, at a cost of about £6.

With a flight time from Gatwick of around 1 hour 15 minutes, it's possible to leave Gatwick at 9am and be in the park by 11!

Where to stay

Despite the presence of an international airport, hotels are few and far between. For the full LEGO experience, the LEGOLAND hotel, which adjoins the park, is highly recommended. However the experience comes at a price. Double rooms start at £140 a night, while a Kids House room which offers more space, luxury and a view over the park, costs £240 a night for up to 2 adults and 2 children. Also within walking distance of the park is the Hotel Propellen whose prices range from £100 for a double room to £130 for a 4-bed room.

If you're on a tighter budget, the LEGOLAND Village, also within easy walking distance, offers chalet style accommodation for £50 for one person or £75 for four. While this is perfectly clean and tidy and offers a good buffet breakfast it is certainly not luxurious. It has a restaurant on site, although it also has a supermarket and communal kitchens which are handy if you tire of paying Danish prices for eating out. The site also has camping/caravan facilities.

Billund

Billund is of course the home of the LEGO Company's global headquarters and one of their main factories. The LEGO offices are a short walk down the road towards the town centre from the park. The factory is on the outskirts of town, close to the airport. Apart from LEGO buildings, there is not much else to see, to be perfectly honest!

LEGOLAND

Billund is the original park, established in 1968. Since then it has expanded considerably, of course, and is roughly the same size, in terms of attractions, as Windsor and Deutschland. Like Deutschland it is flat and compact which makes walking between rides so much easier.

As you would expect, Miniland concentrates on Danish subjects, but there are also segments with models of Japan, Scotland (including a giant oil rig) and Hollywood (complete with a film set in the street). New for 2004 is a model of Billund airport which replaces the ageing model of Munich airport.

Photograph by Huw Millington

Many of the rides are the same or similar to those at other parks. The X-Treme racers ride is the same as the new Jungle Coaster at Windsor and the Project X test track at Deutschland. However, by far the best ride is the Power Builder on which riders are strapped into seats attached to robotic arms which twist and turn according to how the riders have programmed them.

The park houses the largest and best Pick-a-Brick store in Europe. Virtually every size of plate and brick from 1x1 to 2x10 in the ten main colours can be purchased here by weight, as well as a good selection of minifigs, Technic parts, and bricks and plates in newer colours. However at £50 a kilo, it's nearly double the current price at Windsor. In fact, nothing in the park is cheap. Expect to pay 20% more for normal sets than you'd pay at home.

In addition to LEGO-themed attractions, there is also an exhibition of 19th and early 20th century toys including Titania's palace, a very large dolls house, within the park which can be useful for occupying one's spouse while you're busy in the P-a-B store...

Open Season and prices

The park has a relatively short open season, from late March to late October. Ticket prices are comparable with those at Windsor, although if you have a Windsor season pass, you can use it to enter the park once during the season.

Other information

When planning your trip, bear in mind that nothing is cheap in Denmark, thanks partly to their VAT rate of 25%. Eating out can be very expensive particularly if you have alcohol with your meal (£4.50 for ½ litre of lager, upwards of £20 for a bottle of wine). Even basic groceries bought in supermarkets are 30-50% more expensive than in the UK.

Conclusion

Both European parks are worth visiting and if asked to choose which one I liked best I'd be hard pressed to. Both have their pros and cons. Germany is cheaper, but Billund is the home of LEGO and every AFOL should make a pilgrimage at least once.

Links:

Hotel LEGOLAND, www.hotellegoland.dk/

Hotel Propellen, www.propellen.dk

LEGOLAND Village, www.legolandvillage.dk



Copenhagen scene - LEGOLAND Billund

Building the Colonial Vipers

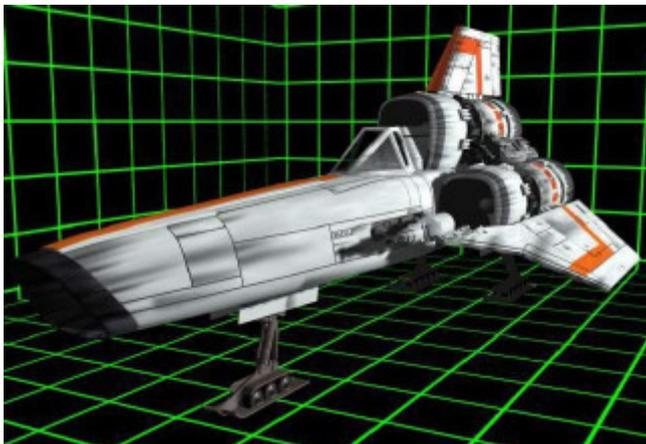
By Rhys Knight

Over the past couple of years many of you have seen my two MOCs of the Colonial Vipers from the 70's Sci-Fi show Battlestar Galactica. Often at shows and fests they get confused with X-Wings, but more often than not, people will recognise what they are, and the one question they always ask is... Why?

Well in this article I am going to tell you why. This is not a 'How to' article, so no parts will be listed, and no techniques will be revealed. However you may gain a little insight to the workings of my brain.

First, a brief introduction to Battlestar Galactica. It was a 1970s show created soon after Star Wars hit the big screen. It was at first designed as a TV movie, but with a much higher budget the current shows at the time (remember Dr Who's & Blake's 7's wobbly sets?) the movie was quite a success, and a syndicated show was released (sadly without the budget).

The main 'Hardware' of the show was of course the Battlestar Galactica (a huge aircraft carrier type of vessel) and its fighters, known as the 'Vipers'. It was these craft each week that our hero's defended a large convoy of human survivors searching for the lost planet of 'Earth'. Our hero's would pilot these small one-man craft with all the skill of WWII fighter aces – and they were very much a part of the show as the main characters.



So fast forward to the early 80's and 'BG' is now being re-run on British TV. A small boy sitting in his London home is watching. Being a fan of the original Star Wars trilogy, he is captivated by the little fighter craft. After the show has ended, he runs up stairs and begins to create one from his LEGO collection, and this was to be the case for many years to come.

As with many AFOLs I had something of a 'Dark Age' with LEGO. Although the interest was still there (added to by Peter Reid!) study, work, girls, beer and general life were very much the order of the day, and little building was happening. A Viper was attempted when I first got the Sci-Fi Channel and found 'BG' being re-run (again!). This was soon broken up and put away.

Now fast forward to the year 2002. I am now 28, married and my first child has been born. As many parents know, sleepless nights are par for the course, Its 2.30 in the morning, you know your little treasure is gonna wake up in about an hours time, do you go to bed, hell no! You get your LEGO out of the loft. But what to build??, for the past couple of years I had been buying LEGO (helped by the Star Wars line) and I had a couple of the new

trans-black canopy (from the X- Wing) and a few of the Egyptian mummy head-dress, looking at them the images of various spaceships locked in my mind from childhood started to resurface (this could happen to you at 2.30 in the morning!) Suddenly the image of my much loved Viper appeared – the canopy was perfect for it !! Then I remembered the helmets that the crew used to wear, the head-dress was great for the job (with a little bit of modification!) So with these images trying to force their way out, I set to work (quietly, I must add).



After a couple of weeks, some Internet research and lots of pausing of the 'Battlestar Galactica' DVD that I had, my Viper was complete, and boy did it look the part, it even had working landing gear !! Once the first one was completed, I had to make another (well they always flew around in pairs in the series). Then some custom minifigs were created to complement them (with the now modified head-dress) and I was set. They have been following me around to fests ever since. At the end of last year I decided to 'retire' both of them, and they sat in a box for months. They made a return at the most recent fest in Yateley. They also seemed to make an impact. Ian Grieg informed me that a chap in the USA was interested in some Battlestar Galactica models and he had posted a picture of my Vipers, also I was approached by Simon Bennet to see if he could LDraw the Viper for me! (I of course jumped at the chance, and I am currently waiting to see the results).

So there you have it, that's why I built them, will I build any more? Who knows. Will I build anything else from the series (there is the possibility of a Cylon Raider, that's what the evil robots flew). Do I love them as I love my own child? Well they did stay in a box in a cupboard for seven months... You decide.

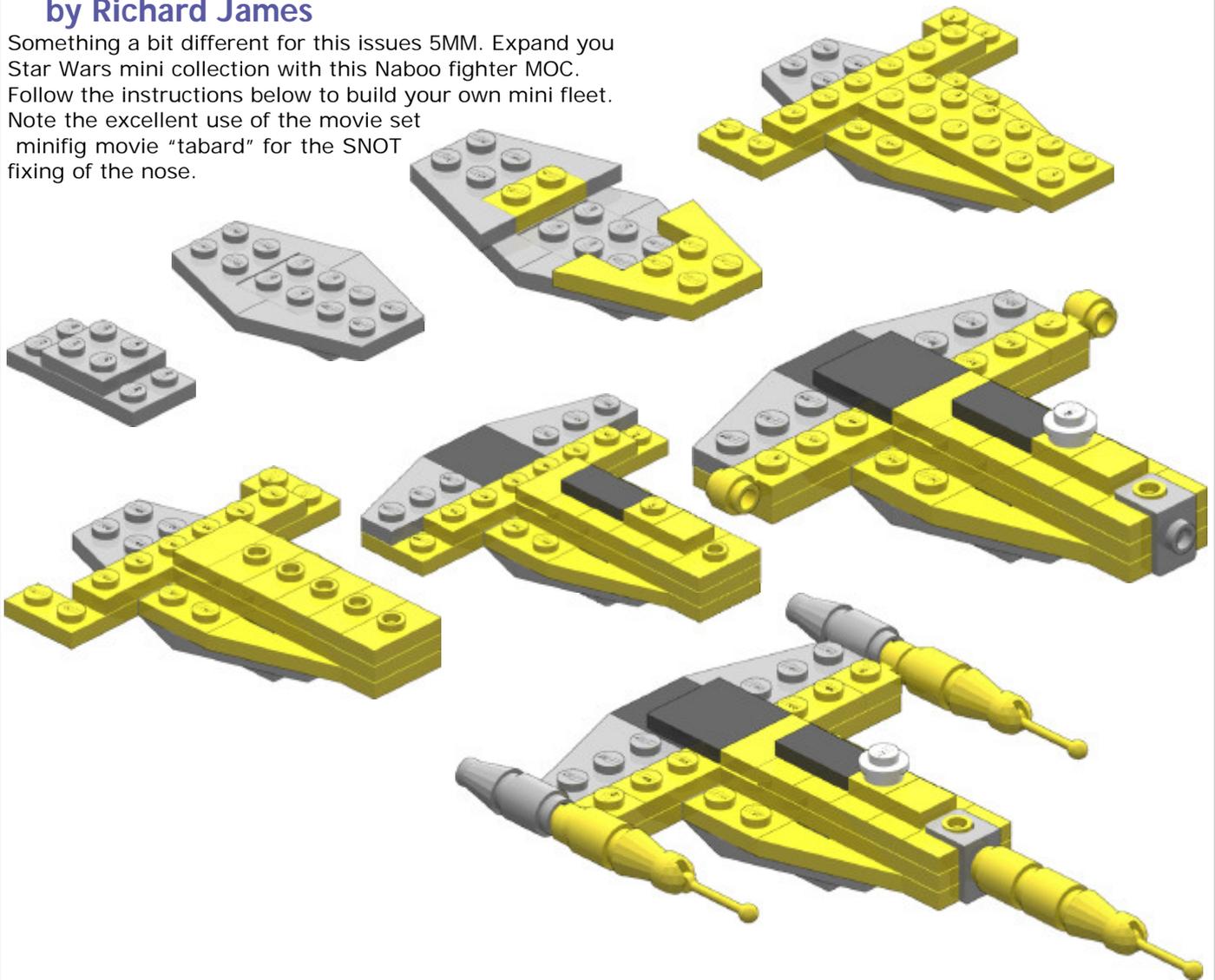


Photographs, Rhys Knight and Jason Walton

5 MINUTE MODELS

6. Star Wars mini Naboo fighter by Richard James

Something a bit different for this issues 5MM. Expand you Star Wars mini collection with this Naboo fighter MOC. Follow the instructions below to build your own mini fleet. Note the excellent use of the movie set minifig movie "tabard" for the SNOT fixing of the nose.



If you have built a small model you are particularly pleased with, or have suggestions for Building Tips, please send a few notes and pictures, or LDraw instructions, to the editor.



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