

Secretary's report

Jon Reynolds, Secretary (secretary@brickish.org)

You might be surprised by two things. First, that this report is by our existing Secretary rather than our new Chairman and secondly that it is indeed the Brick Issue you are reading! You deserve an explanation for both. I'm writing this in Simon's absence due to him being involved in one of those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities which none of us, to be fair, would turn down. Having an active committee is important but it's equally important that we do the right thing for ourselves too and that we have others, such as yours truly, to step in. I expect Simon will be popping his head over the parapet soon so watch this space.

With regards to the overdue newsletter, well there are lots of reasons and the committee has to take this on the chin – it's our fault, sorry – especially to those new members amongst us who will be reading their first copy. That's it. Let's move on and enjoy the issue.

In BI-7 we have more on Pete's robots! These fellas are getting everywhere including the back page (see five minute model). The wide diversity of interests amongst us is demonstrated by David Tabner, our resident maritime expert, with his well-researched ship models. I hope you all enjoy the read.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate Mark Bellis and Huw Millington on their selection to the role of Ambassadors by The LEGO Group. Many opinions have been voiced over the effect these roles will have on our AFOL community, in our website discussions. I hope these healthy discussions continue to help us all appreciate the real effect of the Ambassador project. Whatever your opinion, it is nice to know that we have the two UK based BA members in the scheme rather than a US dominated scene (no offence intended to our buddies over the pond but LEGO have traditionally marketed to the US

consumer base in recent years).

Please keep up the good work with the shows and events. We're getting better at these and having organised Shrewsbury Castle I know how much work is involved. I have to say despite this I really enjoyed the day and would recommend William Howard's article on LEGO shows in Brick Issue 5. It was great to meet up in person with a big bunch of AFOLs again and reminded me that we do not do this often enough. It would be disastrous for the Brickish Association to descend into web-based activities only like some other 'collectors' clubs.

For me, this is a good time of year to get back into building models. As darkness descends ever earlier, the lure of the LEGO room calls. If, like me, you hardly touch the stuff over the summer you'll be rediscovering those new bricks and old un-built sets you had forgotten about. The downside of this is that you WILL have forgotten about quite a lot, like where you put those three micromotors or how come you've bought the same set twice when you only wanted one. It's a good complaint.



Yoda speed building at the AGM, winning team.
Photograph - Chris Salt

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Editor's letter

I can only echo Jon's apologies above for the, very, late publication of BI-7, after the delay I hope you enjoy this issue.

In this issue we have contributions from a wide range of interests and from newcomers to the Brick Issue as well as some old favourites (hello Pete). Articles cover a wide variety of subjects and there should be something for everyone. If there isn't you can always write your own article!

Something that caused a few issues this time round is obtaining good quality photographs (or images in this digital age). For the majority of articles a good image makes all the difference. Given that there are some skilled photographers out there would anybody like to volunteer to write an article on photographing LEGO? My hint is take it outdoors, not direct bright sunshine, against a plain background and use a tripod if available.

Regards Mark Palmer, Editor newsletter@brickish.org

Member Profile: Phil Travis

By Alastair Disley

Welcome to the first Brickish Association Member Profile, a new feature to help members get to know one another. Phil regularly travels to Brickish events from far Up North, and can usually be identified by his flat cap.

*** What is your earliest LEGO memory?**

Receiving set 700/3a for Xmas or birthday in the early 60's - memorable for its checkerboard-presentation layout of the red and white pieces (something LEGO used to do before tumble-packing.)

*** What is the best MOC you've ever built?**

I admit to being more a collector/archivist than a builder. Lack of creative talent I'm afraid. However, I remember I did a nice Spitfire when I was about ten that I was very proud of at the time. I think that the feeling that I could have done more if I had had more bricks is something that was there then and has stayed with me, and partly fuels my continuing interest.

*** What bought you out of your dark ages and when?**

Happening on a trade box of the HO-scale LEGO vehicles at a toy swapmeet about 20 years ago. I was collecting Hornby O-Gauge and was about to give up, because it had pretty much all already been collected and I wasn't getting the enjoyment. My waning collecting interest was rejuvenated, and I haven't looked back.

*** What was your greatest LEGO moment?**

The realisation that I had found the definitive 'mothballed' toy shop treasure trove' (where a lot of my early stuff came from), finding out there were other AFOLs out there, my first visit to 'heaven' at LLW and moving to a bigger house to keep it all in!

*** What's your favourite set and why?**

I'll suggest one from each decade:

60's: 810 town set. There hasn't been an equivalent comprehensive set since.

70's: 928 space set. Set standards that have been aspired to since.

80's: 6285 pirate ship. Good for both playing with and looking at.

90's: 5571 black cat truck. Big and impressive is best. 2000's: 10020 Santa Fe loco. Because it introduced limited edition.

*** Are you a collector or a builder?**

Primarily a collector. It must have been there in my blood early on too; I rediscovered an old 60's LEGO catalogue in which I had ticked every set I had and then carefully calculated how much money I would need to have in order to buy every set that I didn't have!

*** What LEGO-related activity do you spend most time doing?**

Hunting for items to add to the collection (includes scanning eBay) and keeping abreast of general LEGO related things (BA, LUGnet, etc).

*** How do you sort your LEGO?**

By keeping the sets MISB. Then sort the sets by age, theme and size.

*** What is your favourite LEGO element?**

As a collector, I have to concede that the more favourite ones to me are the harder to find ones. If you want me to choose a 'normal' element, I pick a 1x6 grey brick.

*** Which other AFOLs do you collaborate with?**

I am in contact with numerous AFOLs worldwide on a variety of issues, but primarily LEGO history.

*** Apart from LEGO, what else are you into?**

Earning a living takes the majority of my time like everyone else, but when not doing that or LEGOing, I am a hot air balloon pilot and also a bellringer.

*** What do your non-AFOL friends make of your hobby?**

I'm old enough not to care (but I think most of them think it's harmless enough).



Photograph Tim David

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The AFOL Archetypes

By Simon Bennett

I'm sure we all know that there are many different aspects to the LEGO hobby and it occurred to me that it might be interesting to try to describe them.

Before I start I should explain that this is not an attempt to pigeonhole people, I think we all do most of these things to some degree or other. It's more aimed at showing people what others get out of the brick, so they can understand. I've heard a few disparaging comments about people who don't creatively build, and many more about people who only trade and I want to describe how, no matter how we show it, we all love the brick!

I've noticed three distinct types of activities that go on with LEGO. Building, Collecting and Trading. Within each of these there are a few different sub-types.

Collector sub-types

Collectors are into owning LEGO because of what it is rather than what can be done with it. Often they are older AFOLs who remember what they weren't able to have when they were children.

MISB - All sets this person owns will be in Mint Condition. It's important to this type of collector to have the highest quality LEGO, worthy of the quality of the product itself.

Historian - Historians are most likely to have a huge list of set numbers in their head. If they call sets by name it will be the official name LEGO used. They tend to collect older or otherwise rare sets, since these are, obviously, harder to find. They'll often have some of LEGO's original wooden pull along toys or scale cars from the 1950's and some will have shop displays and other glued models they've managed to acquire.

Theme completist - To acquire every set LEGO ever produced would be an impossible task, even LEGO hasn't managed it, but if someone has a particular love for one theme they may want to try to collect all the sets in that theme, it's easier to do this if you aren't fussy if the sets you collect are 'played with'.

Set hoarder - Set hoarders know there's no such thing as enough LEGO. Some will have a room, rooms, or even purpose-built outbuildings devoted to storing their ever expanding stacks of boxes.

Parts hoarder - They may use them, they may not, but these people sure like bricks, they just can't stop themselves acquiring more, they may even specialise in certain types, like 1x1 plates!

Builder sub-types

Building is what LEGO bricks are made for but there are at least five different types of building that I can think of:

Set builder - Set builders always build sets they buy, usually all the alternatives in the instructions as well. The arrival of Designer sets has set off a new challenge to this type of AFOL, that of building all the

'suggested' designs in any set as well as all those with instructions.

Modeller - A modeller likes to build representations of real life buildings, vehicles or objects. The challenge is to make the most accurate or evocative model given the limitations of LEGO such as the lack of compound curves. Modellers tend to be the most adept users of SNOT and most will know what you mean when you say 'selective compression'.

Creator - Creators build from their imagination. This is what LEGO was created for and probably what it does best. I think most AFOLs are creators and we have all built at least one creation in our time.

Displayer - Display builders build for, guess what? Displays. It's good to show what you've built to others, particularly those who haven't seen LEGO for years and don't realise just what we can do with it.

Virtual - Virtual builders use Computer Aided Design programs such as LDraw or TLC's Digital Designer to create and sometimes render their models. It's a great way to build when you don't own the physical bricks.

Trader sub-types

Traders buy and sell LEGO. It's this service that I found most amazing and useful when in 2000 I stumbled over the wide world of LEGO AFOLdom that has grown up on the Internet. Without the traders where would the builders be? Spending ever more on sets just to get the necessary parts, or just unable to build what's in their heads due to lack of cash. It doesn't bear thinking about!

Set traders - These people buy and sell LEGO sets. If you know of a set that came out in your dark ages and you desperately want you can probably find it in a set trader's stock somewhere.

MISB trader - A special sort of set trader that only deals in Mint in Sealed Box sets.

Brick (or Parts) trader - Need four 1x2x2 thin wall panels? One of those hard to find 6x14 plates? 647 of something equally obscure? Brick traders, usually found through Bricklink, can sort you out.

Bricksmith - Bricksmiths design their own sets which they then sell, either just as instructions, as packs of extra parts needed to modify an existing set or as a fully designed and packed set with all the parts you need.

Do you identify, more or less, with one of these types? Are you a combination of two or three? Have I missed out a description which would fit you or have you a deeper insight into why you do your thing with LEGO bricks? I'd be interested to hear.

(Editor - I would consider myself to be a Modeller/Displayer/Creator with a bit or Virtual thrown in. What about you?)



Shedloads of LEGO!

Photograph, and shed, Tony Priestman

Modern House

By Mandy Dee

I was an enthusiastic and creative LEGO builder as a child, given the limited bricks available in those days. Luckily, photographic evidence to support (or refute) this claim does not exist! When my husband, Chris, started building MOCs out of lovely shiny new bricks, I couldn't wait to join in, but did not feel able to compete with the excellent trains, space modules and shops that he and others were making! So I looked for something different to build...

I like modern architecture (well, some of it, anyway), and hadn't seen any 'designer' houses built out of LEGO, so I decided to give it a try. Having seen pictures of Frank Lloyd Wright's 'Falling Water', a fascinating large tiered house in Pennsylvania, I decided to take some inspiration from his work. I was particularly keen to use two contrasting textures for the walls, although I wasn't sure how.



The lack of variety in LEGO windows seems to be a stumbling block for unusual designs, so I like to find interesting ways to use what windows there are. I wanted to incorporate a large glass wall at the front, and found that a 3x3 panel of the black-framed large windows looked effective, and so the whole house was based around this glass wall.



Having toyed with various options for the contrasting walls, I discovered the rock-patterned 2x1 pillars from 'Privet Drive', and used those for two walls, with the other two being tan. To emphasise the contrast, I extended the walls at the corners to form a cross, which is a big design feature of the house

The basic layout of the house is a central glass atrium containing a staircase and dining area, leading to an open plan kitchen area to one side. On the first floor is a lounge built out over the garden, with access to a rear balcony. The top floor is a balcony above the atrium containing a bedroom.

The hardest part of the design was getting the windows of other parts of the house to line up vertically with those in the front wall. The windows are stacked on top of each other without plates between them, for aesthetics, which means that there is no space for floors!

I hadn't originally planned to fit out the interior, but with all the large windows, it needed some detail inside. This is when I found that the whole house is a little too small, as there is no space for a bathroom! Does that matter? Yes of course it does – I do like my designs to be practical! Oh well, next time! As there was little room for clever furniture, I used coloured flooring to create interest inside - purple tiles to floor the bedroom (phew! Just enough) and sand green for the lounge (not quite enough – quick, add some more furniture instead)

Designing the garden is the best bit, and I started with a swimming pool wrapping around the house under the lounge window (what a view!). Next to that, a deck, incorporating a hot tub – macaroni bricks give just the right curved corners. A small bridge over the pool leads to an arch over a stone bench, and a tall glass water fountain. The borders are flowing in shape, and informally planted with foliage plants and a restricted colour palette of flowers. I had just enough of the textured pillars left for a front wall. The final touch was to add some pillar lights in the borders.

The final result is a small, ultra-modern house set within an exciting and party-friendly garden. I'd love to live there – if it only had a loo!

Photographs by Chris Dee



LEGO Inside Tour

Two Brickish Association members were lucky enough to attend the LEGO Inside Tours.

Inside Tour - June 2005

Our group was a little smaller than the May tour but, still had a good mix of fans from the US, Canada, UK, Netherlands and Hong Kong. Right from the start we were all made to feel very welcome and clearly understanding what we like the most, they let us loose on building projects very quickly. After an initial team event building a Duplo brick bridge we were let loose on a mini stock room of all currently available basic elements to build a model that could retail for about £40. After about half an hour I gave up on trying to do a Dalek and made a train crane instead which attracted a lot more praise than I thought it deserved, although I thought there were some much better creations. Despite having a large supply of bricks on hand some people wanted some special elements so one of the designers went to the stockroom with a shopping list, how many times has any of us said 'if only I had a.....' and wished for it miraculously to appear. During this first evening we all mingled with each other and some of the LEGO designers and it was midnight before most people had gone to bed and only then so we wouldn't fall asleep the next day.

The high lights of the next day were the Ideas House, model archive, museum and the factory. The LEGO factory is somewhere I have always wanted to visit since I was a child and it was really great to be in the production room watching elements coming off the conveyers and the boxes being moved around by robots. The warehouse is just totally awesome – you just have to be there. The model archive I have wanted to see since I heard about it last year – the curator got increasingly nervous with so many excited fans in her precious domain. The Ideas House is a showcase for current and new releases and we all got to meet Kjeld Kristianson there, as well as the new CEO Jorgen Vig Knudstorp, who both spent a lot of time with us. In the evening we had dinner in one of the LEGOLand restaurants followed by the judging of the models we had made the day before – unlike Justin I didn't win an award; though Christina, who did, said she thought my model was better than hers. I was happy that we got to keep the models we had made. The remainder of the evening was

spent chatting to the designers which included the occasional probing into what they knew about future releases without much being given away – what a tease!

Our last day included the LEGOLand backstage tour where we got to see behind scenes at what goes on to keep the park running. The bit we all liked the best here was the model makers workshop seeing the work in progress for a new display for Carlsbad and talking to one of the model makers there – the guide actually had to be pretty firm to get us all out of there. After some free time and lunch in the park it was time for the closing ceremony where we were presented with our mystery gift – a recreation of one of the first cars to be designed by Kjeld as a boy when LEGO wheels were first produced; I haven't got round to making mine yet. It all seemed to be over too quickly – though I am sure our hosts Camilla and Trine were glad of a rest as they were on the go the whole time. It was a really great experience, seeing all that we saw, meeting so many LEGO employees and talking to them about their work and meeting other LEGO fans.

Richard James



Richard James and Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen

Inside Tour - May 2005

The participants had traveled from all around the world to take part - they came from Japan, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, America, France and, of course, England. In total there were 21 of us - but they were mostly adults. Anyway I can tell you that it was certainly the experience of a lifetime. If any of you think of going I can highly recommend it. The LEGO Company were extremely generous - we were given loads of fabulous gifts (not to mention the highly collectable goodbye present) and we were shown all the sets from the Nuremburg Toy Fair (minus the Death Star).

During the three day tour, we went to the Elements store, this is where we were allowed ten minutes to fill up a small bag with any elements we wanted! (I managed to get 50 clone troopers and loads of mosaic bricks, in many colours). We also went to the Archives, this is where we got to see three of every set ever produced. The airport

monorail caught my eye, but sadly I wasn't allowed it. My favourite part of the tour was when we all went to the Idea house. This is where we got to see all the new sets that have come out this year. I managed to play with the Viking sets and see the new advent calendar before the public. Sadly we weren't allowed to take pictures in there. Other highlights included a tour of the Factory and a trip to the Marketing house.

We spent loads of time, on many occasions, with the Designers, Jake McKee and other very important and famous LEGO people. We took part in a couple of competitions and I was one of the lucky winners! I won a fantastic basic brick trophy for building a few minifig scale Daleks and a Tardis.

Justin Ramsden

Building LEGO Ships

By David Tabner

As an ex-Merchant Navy officer I know quite a bit about ships. When 10152 Maersk Sealand was released I found I was critical, not in the normal AFOL way, but as someone who has lived and worked at sea. While so employed I accumulated a detailed knowledge of naval architecture. This model spurred me on to look at a largely neglected area of LEGO model making, that of ships.

Scale was the first problem to overcome. Ships are big, in some cases gigantically so. If I attempted to build a Jahre Viking (The world's largest supertanker) in LEGO at minifig scale (about 2cm:3ft), the model would be about 10 metres long! I have only a modest collection of LEGO and limited finances so I knew I had to look elsewhere. A glance at the 10152 revealed the answer:

use the apparent scale of that model as a basis for mine! At a scale of about 1cm:4ft, it was much more manageable. In the meantime I had not finished with 10152 itself. The central superstructure is unusual for the smaller containerships so I refitted it aft, placing it very much over the stern, as is the norm.

Later on, I refitted it again reducing the wheelhouse in width and experimenting with creating a freefall lifeboat falls over the stern. Following a posting on Brickish a while back regarding the colour of a potential 10152 follow-on; I decided to build one for myself. The primary points of feasibility were the colours. After looking at parts availability in various colours I settled on black to replace the Maersk blue. Red automatically replaced dark red for the simple reason that all ships use some variety of red for below-the-waterline.

I pulled from my collection what parts I had and then took a long list onto Bricklink. Some parts existed only from 10152 itself, the white Technic ball joint for example. Now these two ships were finished I decided to name the, after all, ships do have names. For my 'Maerskmod' (as I had got used to calling her) I chose the name Hermione after the character in the Harry Potter books and the Leander class frigate. For my newbuild version of 10152 I chose the name Rockrose after a WW2 Flower class corvette which was itself named after one of my favourite flowers.



Photographs by David Tabner

Throughout my work on these two I had been considering other ship designs and types. I had considered a simple conversion in which I would rebuild Rockrose as a tanker but looking at it in detail I realised that it would entail an almost complete rebuild. I decided to build a new tanker. At the same time I was thinking about a warship too. I LDraw'ed both and created prospective names. Delphi for the tanker, it had to be six characters due to the available width on the stern for using letter tiles, and that name popped into my head and stuck, I think it came from Command & Conquer. Locust was pretty much randomly chosen for the warship but sounded right.

I parted out for both models from my own LEGO in an attempt to run this as a simultaneous multi-build which would make part acquisition on Bricklink easier. However the cost element factored and I put Locust on hold. Delphi was built pretty much according to the original design but I decided that her long sides were too plain so I refitted her with livery markings 'TABNER LINE' down each side in 7-plate (which un-scaled equals 9'3") high lettering using sand green. The Locust remained on hold and I looked smaller. Support vessels of all kinds are needed at sea and in port and I settled on building a tug of a size capable of

towing Delphi. I also decided to change my building practice and looked to provide the parts from my collection only.

For the smaller ships the 1x2x2/1x4x2 aircraft windows would no longer be suitable for use on such a small vessel so I settled on trans-clear bricks instead. I LDraw'ed the tug in one evening and spent another modifying the design. I wanted to use notably different colours, already having basically the same colour scheme for Rockrose and Delphi, so I chose brown over blue. Being sourced purely within my own collection I built her in an afternoon and made relatively few modifications. One evening I was bored and designed a small functional launch. This was never actually built but I used the concept and basic design as the template for two more. One, an all grey Navy training vessel and the other a Harbour Master's or Pilot's launch in white over blue. These reverted to 'Bricklinking' for parts I didn't have. These vessels at 4-wide are realistically the smallest possible.

My next move was to rebuild completely the superstructure on Hermione. I'd never been totally happy with it and as part of that I redesigned the lifeboat falls as well. That didn't take too long and with enough light grey available I made a start on the Locust. I initiated a partial redesign on Locust to remove parts I didn't have or were expensive to procure. Locust is the smallest of my big ships at 70x10studs (length and beam). Warships tend to be narrow vessels and this enabled me to build a much stronger hull. The only modification I've made to her since construction has been to separate her into two halves and rebuilt with a Technic brick and Technic pin joining system. This enabled her to break into two sections for transport.

LEGO Robots (Part II)

By Peter Reid

I like to think I've created a little builder's niche for myself. All my robots are descended from a single original model (see Brick Issue #4), and I like to think there's a nice evolutionary thing going on. All the robots inhabit the same universe (though not necessarily the same dimension, but that's not really important). They're all part of the same story, and it means they can all fight one another if I want.

In my life, I've made barely a handful of robot designs that I'm truly happy with. Over the years I've rejected a huge number of designs, and it's a shame that so many of these robots are lost forever. You can learn a great deal from failed attempts, though.

A lot of what I do is reworking. A lot of time is spent trying alternative versions of existing robot types. Sometimes I'll be inspired by an old part in an exciting new colour, like the dark red 1x1 tiles with clips that recently turned up. All the redesigns are, I assume, part of some subconscious attempt by me to build the perfect LEGO robot. I do wonder what I'd do if I stumbled across the ultimate design. Would I stop building altogether? Ascend to the next level of creative karma? Explode?

There is something stopping me from perfection. It's the fact that I'm not actually a very good builder. There are AFOLs among us who possess a fundamental understanding of the brick that I could never attain. Should I name names? Well Huw Millington and Jason Railton spring to mind most readily. And that's just in the UK. Some of the stuff from the States and Japan is truly awe-inspiring.

Small bits are good. What are the smallest LEGO elements? Off the top of my head I'd say that minifig hands are probably up there (and lovely pirate hooks), as are various bits off the tool sprue. The sort of effect I adore is putting, say, two tool sprue hammers into a pair of town binoculars, sticking a dark grey 1x1 tile (with clip) on the binoculars, then binging a 1x1 round plate on the bottom of the clip, before attaching the whole mess onto a lovely Dalek brick (dark grey, if possible). Dark grey is a fantastic colour. You can get all the best fiddly bits in dark grey. Proper dark grey, I mean.

One thing I'm trying to get away from is the domed eye design that so many of my robots have. According to my (pretend) schematics, it's a multi-sensor...but stupid



people constantly call them noses, and I can't help but get really irritated by such displays of ignorance.

I think the reason for my irritation is I can see what they're saying. Partially at least. They do look like noses. Especially if the dome is red. I'm not saying they are noses...well, part of the multi-functional sensor dome is dedicated to olfactory analysis, but that's not important. What's important is the domes are eyes, not noses.

So, to solve this constant problem of mistaken robotic sensor identification, I've been experimenting with various different eye designs. It's difficult, when building on such a small scale, to convey optical sensors nicely. I tend to favour trans though.

So, in conclusion, my advice to you all is just go for it; build some robots. Give them guns. Make them fight.

Tricks of the trade

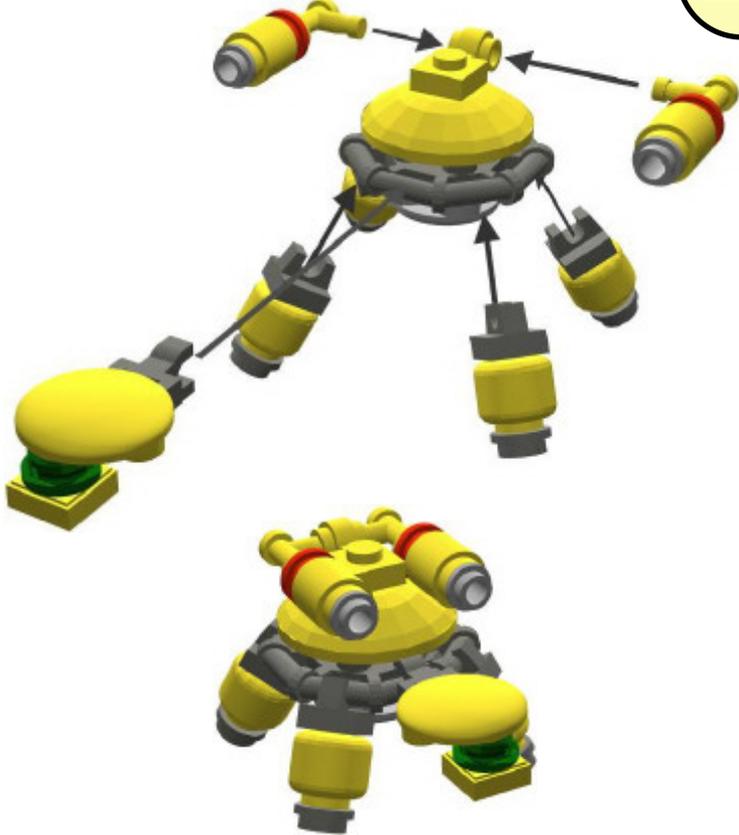
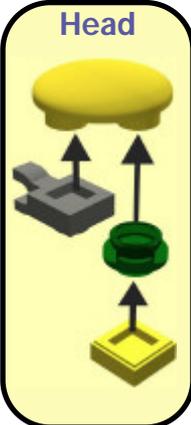
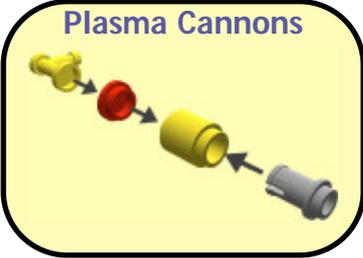
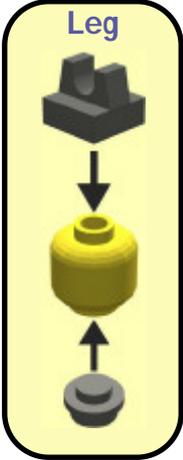
- Start with a Dalek brick. They're so brilliant. You can build in five directions from the one piece.
- The largest piece I've used in a small robot is a 3x1 plate. The smallest piece - probably a pirate hook hand.
- 1x1 tiles/plates with clips can be used 'incorrectly' (yet legally) when you stick old style toothed hinges into the clips.
- Hands are a constant problem. I'm not that keen on the old 80's robot arm pieces. These days I prefer to make my own. The best small-scale hand I ever made only has two fingers and a thumb, but it looks okay. Spanners are also good if you're in a hurry.
- There are two Technic pieces that I find infinitely useful. The half pin and the type of one half bush
- Keep an open dish of 1x1 round plates in your building area.
- Try to build so your robots can be posed in a variety of cool positions. Use rotations and angles in a subtle way.
- Dare to make it better. The Japanese word is kaizen. It means continual improvement. Going back to a model and carefully changing just a few elements can work wonders.



Photographs by Pete Reid

5 MINUTE MODELS

7. Turtle Droid By Pete Reid



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.



Diorama and photograph
Huw Millington

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