

The newsletter of the Brickish Association

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The BRICK ISSUE

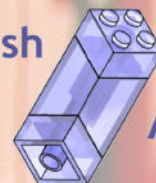
Event Reviews

The Great Western LEGO Show BA Christmas Party

Plus
LDC Audition Report
LEGO Board Games
Tranquility Base

www.brickish.org

The Brickish



Association

The Association Matters

Club News

The Brickish Association

www.brickish.org

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Andrew Walker

Editor's Letter

Welcome to the 19th *Brick Issue!*

The *Brick Issue* reflects what you, as a member, and we, as a club, get up to. From group displays to individual MOCs. If you have attended an event, or built something interesting, please let me know about it!

The club is gaining more new members all the time. If you have attended your first event, or exhibited your MOCs in public for the first time, why not write an article about how you feel taking your hobby to the next level!

David Mackenzie

newsletter@brickish.org

Chairman's Report

It's a cliché, but it's been another busy few months in the BA! Since the last *Brick Issue* we've again put on a fabulous display at STEAM, met up at LEGOLand Windsor for the Christmas party and are processing not just one, but two LUGBULK orders amongst a host of other things.

This January I had the chance to meet up with LEGO at the London Toy Fair and chat about how LEGO see the Brickish Association. I'm sure it won't come as a surprise to most of you, but you'll be pleased to hear that we're held in very high regard by LEGO UK. Whilst explaining to a new member of their team what we do, it struck me just how much hard work and effort every member of Brickish puts in to promote both ourselves and the LEGO brand. So, from me – and from LEGO – a big thankyou to everyone for being so committed in 2009.

The introduction of the LUGBULK ordering system – allowing LEGO AFOL clubs to order parts direct – is an interesting development as well. This is the first time that LEGO have officially allowed us to order direct from the factory. If you've followed the on-line forums you'll know that Brickish has participated in both of these orders so far and intends on continuing to do so. Of course, nothing is perfect and managing this ordering process is something that is new to the BA. So I think you can expect how we deal with this to evolve as the LUGBULK system evolves too.

Finally, with a short time left until the next AGM, I'd like to remind you all to put 27 March in your diary. I'd encourage you all to attend if you can, not just to carry out the official part of the day (which lasts for less than an hour!), but to show off your MOCs, meet fellow members and generally have a good time. I've also got some exciting announcements to make at the AGM too – but you'll have to wait until March for those!

Play On!

Warren Elsmore (chairman@brickish.org)

Forthcoming Events

27-28 March: Brickish Association AGM, Sheffield

In addition to the Association business, there will be MOC displays and socialising.

1-5 April: "Energy and its Applications", Manchester

We have been invited to display at MOSI (Museum of Science and Industry) in Manchester. The theme is "Energy", so MOCs should demonstrate energy its application.

17 April: Petersfield LEGO Show

The seventh Petersfield event will follow a similar format to previous years.

8-9 May: LEGO Trains at Glenrothes

The second time at the new venue, everyone is welcome to come along and bring a train, building or just help out.

16 May: AFOL Display at Merrist Wood

A massive and diverse annual event with 12,000 visitors every year.

The Members' Area of the Brickish website contains more details on all the above events. If you are interested in participating, contact the event organiser.

The Trials and Tribulations of Agent Sinister

Brickish Christmas Party – LEGOLAND Windsor, 28 November 2009

by Agent Sinister

The sun had barely risen in the chilly November sky on that fateful day, the day I hoped that my long mission to discover the truth would finally be at an end. Would I be able to return to the real world at the end of it?

My mission was simple – in 2004, the world of Adult Fans of LEGO, or AFOLs as they like to call themselves, was rocked to its very foundations by a sud-

den decision by LEGO to change the standard colour of their grey bricks. What could be behind this dastardly act? No-one really knew the true answer, was there some kind of shady corporate deal going on behind the scenes or was the truth more... sinister... than that? All I knew was that my bosses in “The Agency” had become concerned and they had assigned me, a lowly level 5 operative, to track down the truth.

And so I had assumed the simple guise of an AFOL myself, amassing a modest quantity of bricks, founding a website, learning the lingo, attending events and throwing together a few small creations to build up my cover story. It was perfect - idiosyncrasies aside, I had been largely accepted into the community. And yet, five years on, I was still nowhere nearer finding the answer. But today I was hoping that I would be able to track down the truth, return to my real family and end what had become known as *The Bley Gambit* once and for all.

I was due to meet with other AFOLs from the Brickish Association at LEGOLAND Windsor - ostensibly for a Christmas Party - my aims were much more direct than acquiring more brick. I had received word from a contact that the truth behind *The Bley Gambit* would be made available to me. I could not turn down the opportunity.

Alas, I was not the first to arrive, others already had settled in at the manor house, and this did not bode well, my contact might have been scared off. I skulked around for a bit, laying out a few random LEGO creations (or MOCs) to distract the gathering AFOLs – a cybernetic dinosaur, some robots and spaceships, it was enough to deflect attention as the crowd soon turned to more worthy MOCs, including a selection of zoo scenes for a competition.

The events began in earnest with an admittedly excellent run-down of the events of 2009 from Guy Bagley and included news of the new Pirate Land that will be appearing in the park. I tried to catch his eye, to determine if he were my contact, but my utterances of the relevant code words fell on deaf ears.

As the day went on, deals were done, goods were traded and there was banter aplenty. Except... where was my contact? He had promised to be there, and



Could this be my contact? No, he didn't have a clue.

yet there was no sign. This meant only one thing, my charade as an AFOL would have to be maintained for a few hours more. And so I threw myself into the speed build, with little success, as I tried to build my LEGO pelican from the picture on the front, totally failing to realise there were instructions on another page. Idiot! My cover could be blown with such stupidity! I fared little better in the quiz – seriously, who re-

members set numbers with such accuracy anyway?

As the AFOLs grew suspicious of my lack of knowledge, I swiftly turned to something else, discussing new sets, taking photos of my sigfig amongst the other creations that had been assembled, and collecting as much old grey brick as I could carry home in my car – essential evidence if “The Agency” and I were to prepare a case for prosecution. It was proving to be a pricey mission, and I can only pray that my bosses have a quick turnaround on expenses payments.

Eventually, the time came to take our traditional meander around the closed theme park. Perhaps my contact would make himself known to me during our wanderings? As I wrapped up warm, I prayed that it would be so, there's only so many times you can talk about LEGO fire stations without going insane.

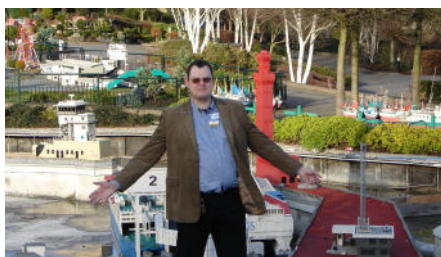
Watching David Tabner's Miniland-scale train going over a bridge was rather fun, but there were no shadowy agents hiding in the trees and still no answer to the mystery.

Our extra-special treat this year was the chance to walk around the Laser Raiders ride – not just once, but twice. The second time was in the dark, with strangely illuminated creatures on the walls, it seemed the perfect time for my Bley contact to pull me to one side, but... nothing. Frustrated and tired, I returned to the manor house.

The winner of the zoo competition was a very deserving Tim Goddard, but he wasn't my contact either - I refrained from killing him in my frustration.

The BA auction late that afternoon was the usual bawdy fun and I enjoyed the time despite my growing apprehension that my mission was a waste of time. I even bought a couple of items, apparently owning a BA mug now makes me a “proper member” and thank you Michael for the opportunity to prove myself. But I can only feel despondent that my mission to uncover *The Bley Gambit* once and for all that day was ultimately a failure. Perhaps my contact is dead, perhaps he never existed at all, perhaps my cover is blown and this is my punishment.

Please send help soon, I think the LEGO is getting to me.



Look! It's all old grey!

The Greatest Show on Earth

The Great Western LEGO Show — Swindon, 3–4 October 2009

Special Photo Report

The Great Western LEGO Show is by far the Brickish Association's largest public event. Held every year at the STEAM museum in Swindon since 2003, it is always popular with the public and Association members alike. Here is the event in pictures...



Gary Davis with his FAB Thunderbird 2



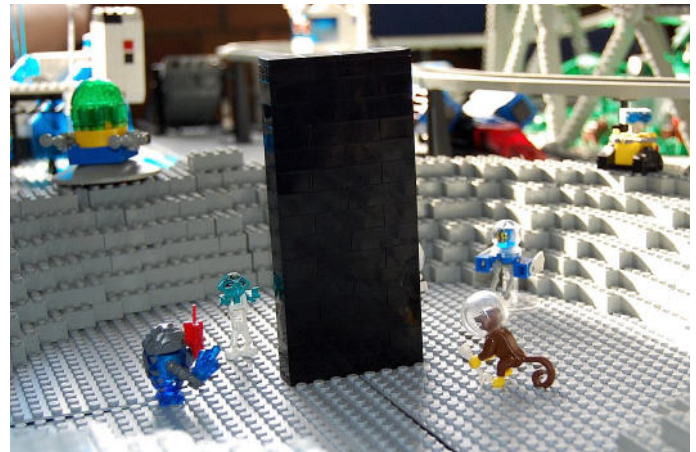
Collaborative Bricksboro Beach display



James Sutton gives an LDRAW presentation



Large visitor numbers



2001: A Space Odyssey



Large Star Wars mosaic



St. Pancras Station, by Warren Elsmore

Photographs on these pages: Louise Dade, Mandy Dee, Dee Earley, William Howard, Andrew Summersgill, David Tabner, Andrew Walker



Dangermouse pillar box, by Louise Dade



Beachfront apartments



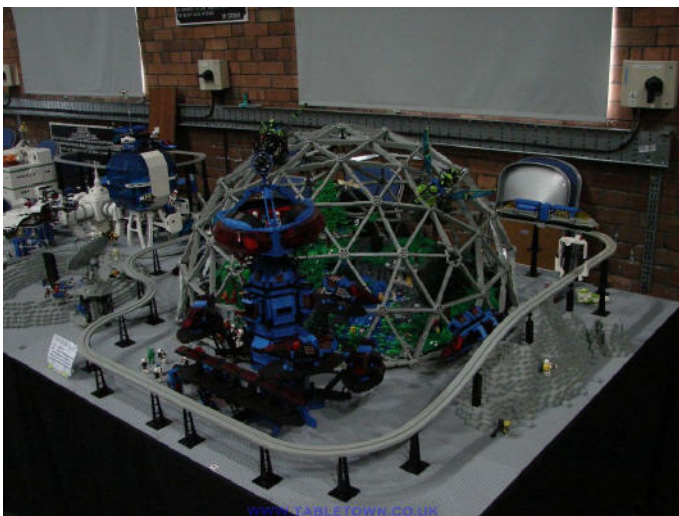
K-9 by Steven Locke



Bert and Ernie, with Rubber Duckie



Intercity train



Impressive space display



Large Routemaster model



How it all began... with a train layout



Deep within the Bricksboro Beach display

Hot Sets

Event Previews

by David Graham

What were the most popular sets for 2009?

Looking at Brickset, ten sets got a review of 4.7 or above out of 5. Three were Bionicle – so they must be popular; The LEGO Group must understand that's what people like, but I don't. Two were Star Wars, sets 8036 *Separatists Shuttle* and 8038 *The Battle of Endor* - so Star Wars is still popular after ten years.

Two are from the Power Miners range, 8959 *Claw Digger* and 8960 *Thunder Driller* – it's good to know that TLG can produce new themes that are popular. Another two sets are from City, 7634 *Tractor* and 7639 *Camper Van* – good to see this theme continuing to be popular.

Finally from the Castle theme: 10193 *Medieval Market Village* – this had the highest rating of 4.9, I was intrigued why it did not get 5.0 but on checking out the reviews all gave 5.0 – so it must be the perfect set. Buy it before they are sold out!



10193 Medieval Market Village – the perfect set?



16 May

**AFoL Display at Merrist Wood Summer Show
Merrist Wood Campus, Guildford College**

This will be our sixth display at the annual event which sees more than 12,000 visitors in a single day. It is a more relaxed one than most, being a single day and not opening until 11:00. The display is all themes, and a great opportunity for AFoLs in the central south to get together. There are a lot of other displays and activities too, from other local groups and showcasing the campus's countryside specialties.

5-6 June

**AFoL Display at World in Miniature Event
Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, Quainton**

This will be our first time here, so we don't quite know what to expect yet. Our sub-venue will be the Platform area in the Rewley Road Station building. The display will be weighted in trains and transport, though all themes are welcome. There will be real running steam trains outside, as well as the miniature railway, and hopefully other displays too. There will probably be accommodation available for exhibitors.

4 July

**AFoL Display at Miniature Steam and Model Day
Twyford Historic Waterworks, near Winchester**

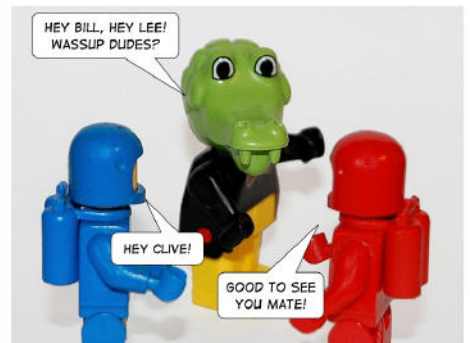
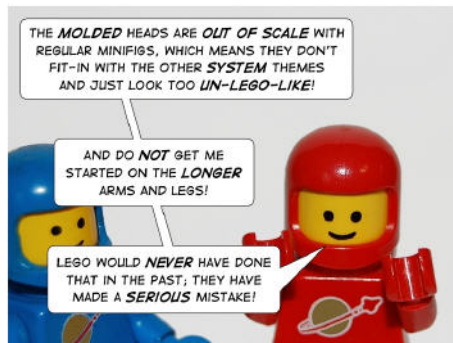
This will be our fourth display at this fascinating annual single-day event. The display will be weighted in trains, architectural and transport models, though all themes are welcome. This, like Merrist Wood, is a great opportunity for AFoLs in the central south to get together. There will also be miniature traction engines steaming around and the narrow-gauge railway will be running.

*If you would like to exhibit – or just help out – at these events, contact **David Tabner**.*



Last year's Merrist Wood event

TRANQUILITY BASE



WWW.TRANQUILITYBASECOMIC.CO.UK

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Not Bored But Certainly Game

by Sian Hockaday

Over the last few months, we have bought four LEGO games: *3848 Ramses Pyramid*, *3842 Lunar Command*, *3838 Lava Dragon* and *3837 Monster 4*. The games have been getting rave reviews in the press for their originality. However, I was mainly attracted by the microfigs and novel minifig heads. The games come in fairly solid cardboard boxes which look appealing in the shops and will serve as long term storage for the games in our LEGO cupboard.

Some Interesting Parts

The LEGO die has slightly squishy rubber edges, with 2x2 lugs inset on each side. Tiles can then be attached to create different dice. Each game also comes with a large minifig spanner which can be used to remove tiles from the die and other lugged surfaces – I wish I'd thought of doing this years ago. As the die has lugs on each face, I imagine AFOLs will enjoy using it to build novel creations. It also bounces well.

Monster 4 has a collection of suitably spooky minifig heads: white skulls with conjunctivitis, scary pumpkins, red devils blowing raspberries, green trolls, and brown werewolves which are just asking to be tickled under the chin. All this for under a tenner.

Ramses Pyramid has pearl gold goblets, jumpers, a rock crystal and a scorpion. These will all be handy for pirate treasure hoards and exotic palaces. The Pyramid also contains the long lusted after 2x2 jumper in dark tan. I'm sure this piece will appear in many future sets and will be useful for doing half stud corner offsets. Dark tan, whilst not my favourite colour, is undoubtedly a useful colour for creating realistic architecture. A very useful 32x32 tan baseplate is also included.

Both the Pyramid and Lunar games contain opaque hollow 2x2 domes. I particularly like them in the happy lime and orange colours of the lunar game. This shape may have potential as decoration for robots and hi-tech machinery. Also suitable for *find the lady*. *Monster 4* and *Lunar Command* contain appealing white 1x1 rounds with central holes.

Microfigs

Aah, these are lovely, cute little things. Although, I do wonder whether they should be called demi-figs rather than microfigs as they are not one millionth of a standard minifig (sorry pedantic physicist at work). They all have a slightly retro look, with their arms by their sides.

Lunar Command has micro astronauts in yellow, orange and lime, emblazoned with the classic space logo. *Lava Dragon* has medieval knights in red, blue, yellow and white.

Each knight sports a different heraldic emblem. My favourite is the white knight's red lion rampant. The pyramid contains adventurers in Arab dress and cute mummies with exceptionally detailed printing and puppy dog eyes. The adventurers come in red, yellow, orange and blue. *Minotaurus* also contains microfigs, and the new *UFO Attack*, *Magma Monster* and *Pirate Plank* will also contain more microfigs.

Game reviews

Monster 4 is a fun four-in-a-row game. It's fairly short when just two people play. *Lava Dragon* is also a fun quick game. The winner gets to do lots of gloating by flying away on the dragon. We enjoyed both games. I'd recommend playing one of these shorter games before attempting one of the larger games, as it took us a while to understand the rules.

I'm used to playing board games where the rules describe the process of the game. The Lego rules are written differently and instead describe the function of all the different components. This took me a while to get used to.

Ramses Pyramid has rules which are considerably more complicated than for the smaller games. The first game was a 'training game' to practice the rules. For example, we eventually decided that ad-

venturers could step onto a layer containing a mummy as long as the mummy wasn't on the same side of the pyramid as them. We also introduced a rule change by deciding that adventurers didn't have to move up or down the pyramid, but could decide to stay put. Pyramid is meant for eight-year-old children, however two 41 year olds with several degrees between them gave up first time (although wine may have contributed to the challenge!)

Lunar Command – early on in the construction, we found a slight error in the instructions – this was a bit confusing. We liked the UFOs and thought they looked like something from the *Forbidden Planet* (which microfig is Leslie Nielsen? And the robots look like lava lamps!). This game is the only one of our four games that is designed for two players only. I'm afraid we gave up half way through reading the rules.

Ideas for future games

I'd most like to see a game that takes about half an hour to play with a complex playing space, e.g. a haunted house, but with easy rules that mix well with a glass of wine.

I would like to recommend the wine we also tested alongside the games: Stella Bella, an Australian pink Muscat. It's an unusual rosé pudding wine with a few bubbles. Almost as cute as the microfigs.



Brickish Got Talent

LEGOLAND Discovery Centre, Manchester, 25 November 2009

by James Shields

For many LEGO fans the ultimate dream is to be able to play with bricks all day long, so the opportunity to work as a model designer must be very tempting.

When I heard there was a model maker job going at the new Manchester Discovery Centre, I was quite excited and couldn't resist the opportunity to try out for it. Once I'd talked my work into letting me have an extra day off (borrowed from Christmas), I booked a flight, and off I went.

Arriving just in time for the first building challenge, I quickly scribble my name on the release form and follow the other candidates into the building room where we're introduced to our host, master builder Marcel.

We are each assigned a table, which was stacked with a pile of bricks and a large grey baseplate. Marcel announces we have fifteen minutes to build an animal, so we all set to work.

The selection of bricks isn't bad, but there aren't a lot of special parts. There are some interesting orange radar dishes, and I briefly consider using them to form the shell of a tortoise, but I can't find any parts to position them at angles, so I abandon that idea. I came in with an idea of sculpting a gorilla, but I started building in white as it seemed to be the most common colour on my table, so I soon decide it better be a polar bear instead. Or maybe a Yeti. I use one of the orange dishes for a hat.

The fifteen minutes are over incredibly quickly, and I only just manage to cram on the last bricks before the time is up.

Outside I'm pulled aside for a brief interview to camera, the first of several during the day. "Why did you apply for the position?" "It's my dream job and I needed to find out if I'd be good enough."

We have a few minutes anxious waiting before being called back into the building room to hear how we did. Back inside, Marcel announces the builders who are through to the next stage. The standard was quite high and there were some quite good models that didn't make it through. I'm relieved to be one of the first to hear I'm through to the second challenge. A couple of others are asked to explain their models before being told they are also through.

There's a brief photo-shoot of the builders with their models, and then we break for lunch. I find a local café for some fish and chips, which are very welcome as it's been some

time since breakfast, having left my house at six. Back at the hotel, I chat with the other applicants while we wait for the second task. As far as I can tell, all but one are

AFOLs to some degree. The non-AFOL says he hasn't touched a brick in years, but cites LEGO as his main reason for becoming a professional model maker. He says he'll dig out his old LEGO when he gets home.

The second task is to build a face. I settled on Terry Pratchett, who I'm a big fan of. I've brought a couple of books with his photo inside the cover, and I've drawn a sketch of his face and added grid lines.

Back in the room our hour starts, and with the clock ticking we all rush for the massive crate of tan bricks. I load up my baseplate with a big stack, adding lots of grey for Terry's beard. I decide to start at the lips, working upwards, concentrating on the centre of the face, on the basis that if I have time at the end I can add more of the beard. I consider using plates for more detail, but realise the selection available is too restrictive, so I work on a blocky face entirely from bricks, stepping out to build the facial details.

The hour seems to fly by, but my face steadily gets taller, and the grey of Terry's beard and moustache gives way to the tan of the skin tones. Terry's nose is quite distinctive, so I focus on that. I reach the eyes, and decide to use some plates to add a little extra detail, with trans-blue bricks for the pupils. Above, I add more grey for the eyebrows, and finish off the forehead. There's just a minute left, but I can't think of anything else to do – there's no time to extend the beard.

Finally time is called, and we are each asked to bring our model to the front of the room for a photo op and to say a few words about what we've built. We're ushered out while the judging takes place.

We are then allowed back in, and each asked to bring our face forward and put it on the central table. As we do so, we're assigned to stand on one side of the room. Four of us stand in each group. I'm hopeful because a couple of the models in the group I'm standing with are really exceptional. But then again, a couple of the others are very good too. After a tense moment, Marcel announces our group are the ones to stay.

We then have a final photo-shoot of us all sitting in a huge pile of bricks. I had to kneel on them for quite a few minutes, so never let it be said that I'm not prepared to go through physical pain for the job.

Finally, I sit down with Marcel and one of the other LDC people for the HR type interview. It goes well, I think, though you never can be sure.

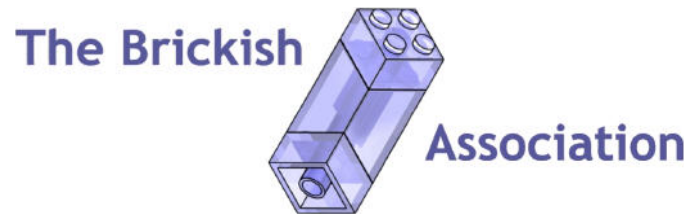
Three weeks later: I hear that another candidate was chosen. I can't deny being a little disappointed, but I did have a very enjoyable day, so it was well worth turning up for.



Sir Terry Pratchett



One of the LDC staff with James



AGM Agenda

- 1 Report by the Chairman
- 2 Report by the Treasurer
- 3 Election of Vice Chair

There is one candidate:
Julie Greig
- 4 Election of Secretary

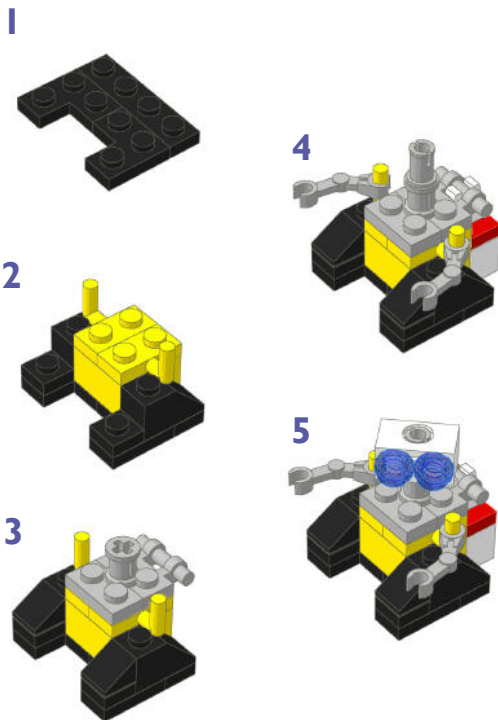
There is one candidate:
Emma Smith
- 5 Special Announcement
- 6 Any other business

The Back Page

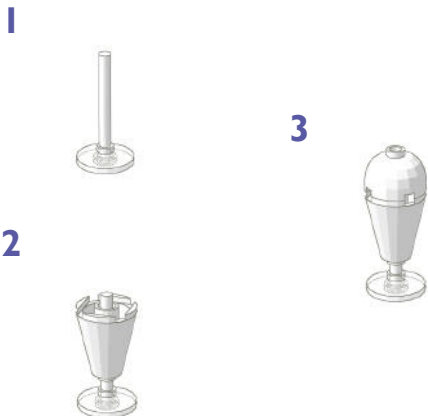
5 Minute Model

by James Shields and James Brophy

Wall-E



EVE



Event Preview: AGM

This year's AGM takes place on **27-28 March** at **Wadsley Parish Hall, Worrall Road, Sheffield, S6 4BB**.

Although the purpose of the AGM is to cover important Association-related business, this takes up only a small portion of the day.

The event is members-only, but there is opportunity to display models and socialise with other members. It is an

Brick-oku

devised by Bluemoose

As with a Sudoku, the aim is to fill in each of the small grids with the letters in the phrase **LEGOBRICK**.

In addition, each letter should appear just once in each row and column.

	E				C	B	
G		B			E		O
I			L		C		R
	G	I				E	
				C			
		R				L	O
	R		E		I		B
L			O			K	C
	B	O					I

LEGOBRICK

BI-18 Brick-oku solution

B	L	R	G	K	E	I	C	O
E	G	K	I	C	O	L	R	B
O	C	I	L	B	R	K	E	G
K	I	E	R	G	B	C	O	L
R	O	C	E	L	I	B	G	K
G	B	L	C	O	K	E	I	R
C	R	O	B	E	L	G	K	I
I	E	B	K	R	G	O	L	C
L	K	G	O	I	C	R	B	E

ideal first event for new members who would like to get more involved in displaying their models. There are also a number of fun competitions run throughout the day, as well as the opportunity to buy and swap LEGO.

If the AGM is your first Brickish event, why not write about your experience? What did you enjoy about the day, and how do you feel taking your hobby to the next level?

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Please send submissions for inclusion in *The Brick Issue* to the editor: newsletter@brickish.org

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