

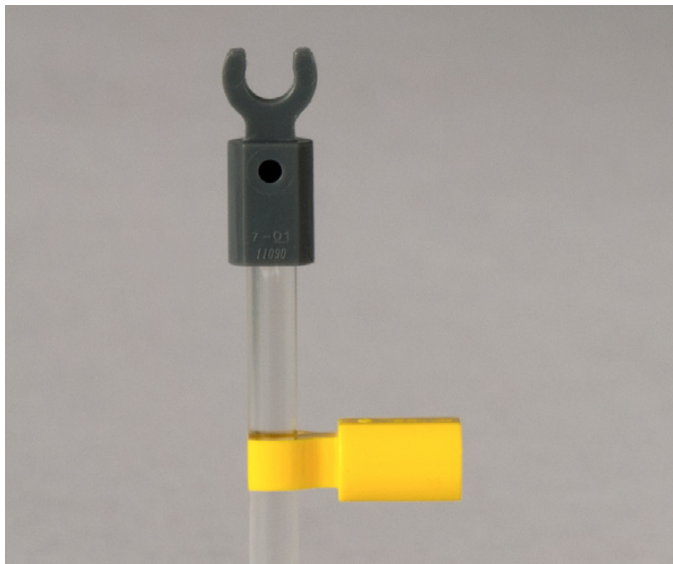
2013: a year in parts

By Tim Johnson

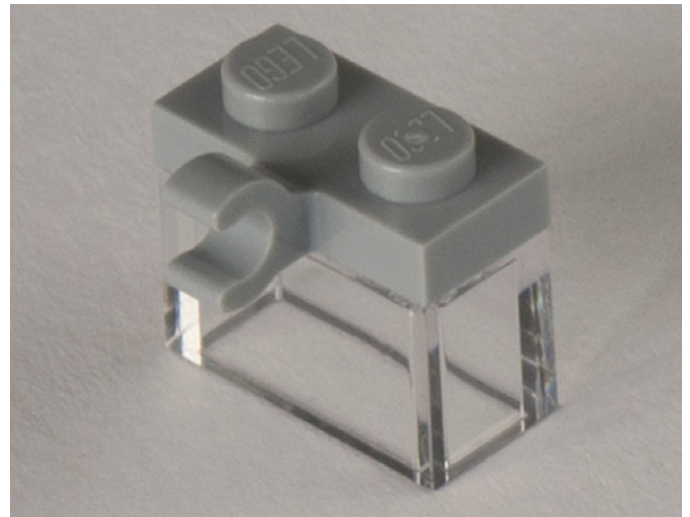
Something I really hate on the internet at the moment is the glut of picture-based articles with titles like “22 Things You Really Need To Look At”. What irritates me is - I obey and I look at them. What is the human obsession with numbered lists anyway?

Just needed to get that off my chest before I... um... how can I say this... well, here are 13 New Parts From 2013 Sets That You Really Need. Not a complete list by any means; just the ones I think are the most useful or beautiful, and great inclusions in your parts collection. They're in no particular order.

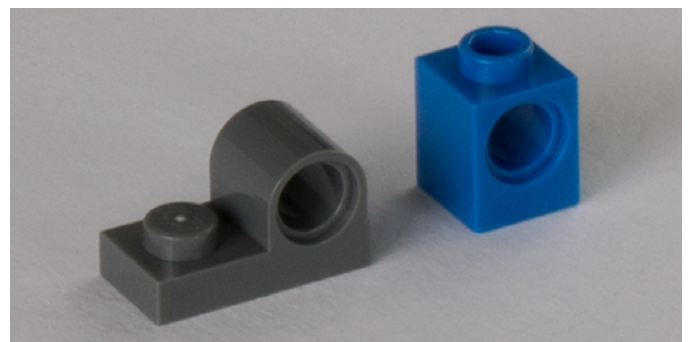
It's been a great year for small parts - and this little clip is about as small as they come. There are of course a great number of small parts with clips already, but this one has a hole that fits a bar. With so many parts having bars, and of course the ability to rotate the clip 360°, the possibilities are effectively infinite. In terms of functionality, I think this is the most useful part of 2013. They also have aesthetic use – they make great hands or claws! Currently they come in Black, Dark Bluish Gray and Yellow.



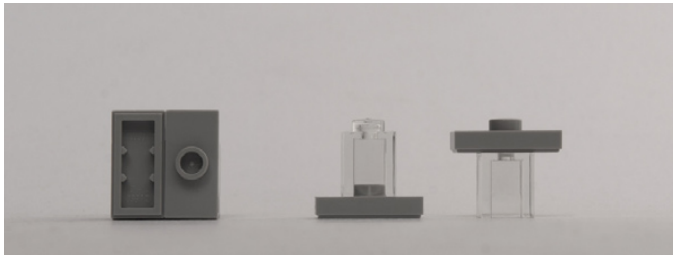
Here's another addition to the world of clips. Nowhere near as exciting as the last, but excellent nonetheless, as this plate with an offset clip will help you out in some tight situations. For example, set designers have been using these to attach handlebars to little vehicles; it's smaller and more stable than using a 1X1 clip on a jumper plate. A similar brick (95820/30237) has been around since 1999, but having a plate version is of course preferable.



This part is another that bases itself on the 1X2 plate, for the extra stability that brings. Essentially it does what a 1X1 Technic brick does, but without requiring the addition of a stabilising part on top. And of course the pin hole is of the Technic beam style rather than the Technic brick style, meaning greater flexibility. I'm no master of Technic but this is definitely a useful piece for everyone to have. Aside from all that – it just looks beautiful on its own! It could be a very interesting decorative piece.

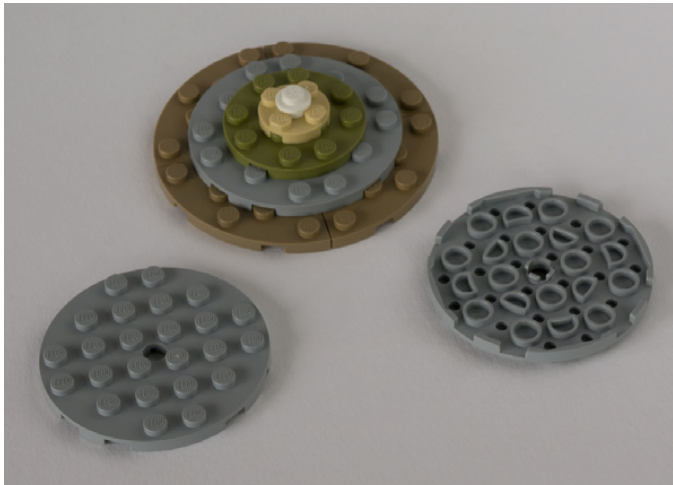


They say that you can't teach an old dog new tricks, so I guess it's best to replace your old dog with a puppy. The beloved jumper plate has been helping us to build 'off the grid' for 35 years now, but the new mould for 2013 has added functionality: as well as centring parts placed on top, you can now centre parts placed underneath thanks to the addition of the 'nail rail'. Of course the humble 1X2 tile allows the same effect, but the new jumper plate offers stability and of course the option to continue building on top. At time of writing these have appeared in White and Light Bluish Gray, but will certainly get rolled out across all required colours over the coming years.

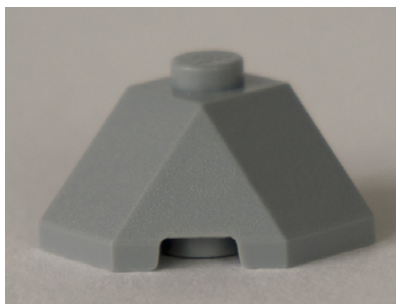


1980 saw the introduction of the 1X1 and 2X2 round plates but it wasn't until 2008 that the family grew to include the 4X4. An 8X8 is easily made with four of the 4X4 quarter-circle plates (introduced in 2001), so with the addition of this 6X6 in 2013 it feels like an important gap in the family has now been filled – especially as it matches part 48092, the 'large macaroni' brick. But the round plate family still has areas ripe for expansion – one of my favourite parts of 2012 was the 4X4 with a large 2X2 hole.

It's arguably the simplest part in this list, and that's a nice thing. It's great to see that half a century on, there are still basic parts to be created. It has almost always appeared in Light Bluish Gray - the exception being that we got a Medium Azure one in 41008 Heartlake City Pool. Medium Azure is denoted as a "Friends colour" and 2013 has seen significant expansion to part availability including basic bricks and plates.



At last, the perfect way to top off a wall that has a faceted corner. All sorts of 45° slope bricks have been included in the LEGO® inventory since 1958, including some that have since been discontinued, so it was a little surprising when this new one turned up – but of course welcome. Even more surprising is the happy accident of geometry that results in one side being a perfect equilateral triangle. It's only been in four sets so far, but happily in three colours: Blue, Dark Brown and Light Bluish Gray.

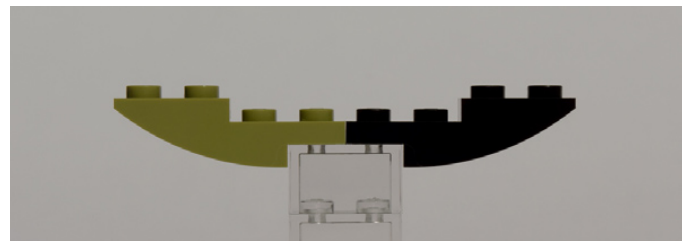


This ice cream cone is far superior to the goblet that minifigs are regularly seen eating ice cream out of. But in fact no minifigs have officially got their clippy little hands on this great new part as yet; to date it has only appeared in two Friends sets and a Friends polybag. This will change in 2014; set 70804 from The LEGO Movie is an ice cream truck that uses

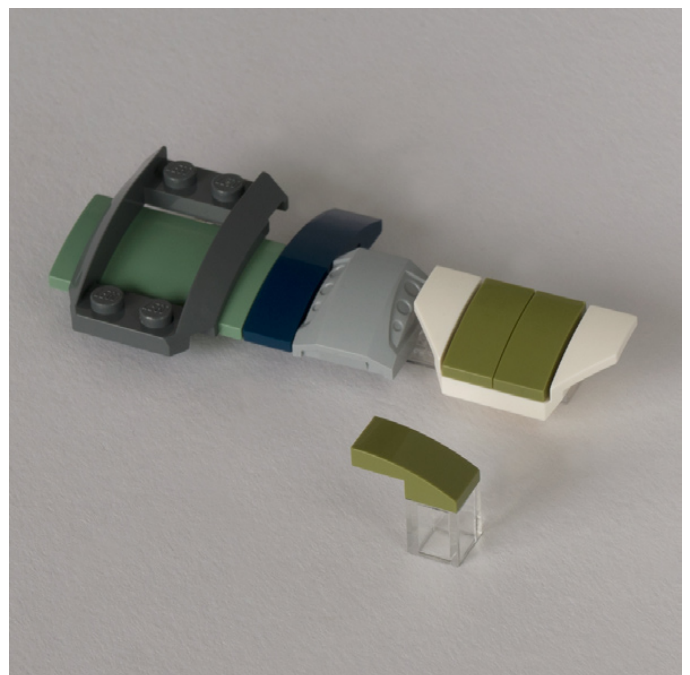
this part. An inverted cone is not common in LEGO and quite aside from dairy trade retail applications, is a very fun piece to build with. Tan is a good colour for architecture and this shape certainly has some uses there. But we're desperate to see this in more colours, right? Even just bley, for the spaceship builders. They love a cone.



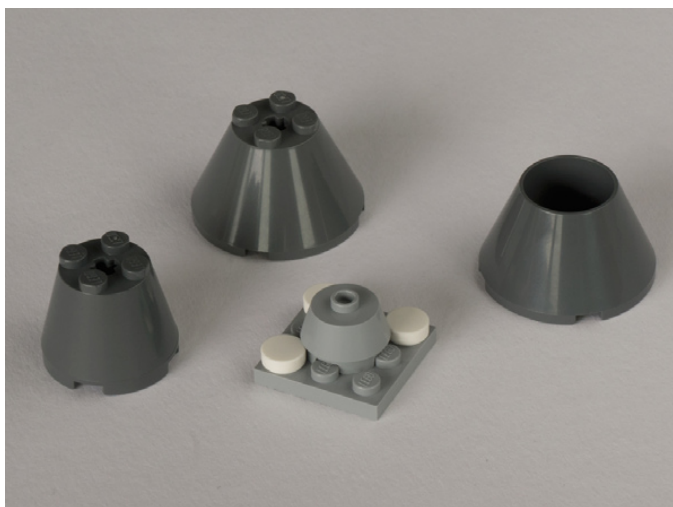
More inverted goodness here. This new curve is almost a mirror reflection of the regular 1X3 bow, 50950. Although the curve is very close to the existing 1X6 inverted bow (42023), it's great to have a new inverted bow – especially a smaller one. The staggered rear end might look odd, but it's quite clever: it allows the part to be secured above and below whilst still remaining only one brick tall. So far it only comes in the two colours shown here; Black and Olive Green.



The category of curved slopes, or bows, has seen great expansion in recent years. This 'baby bow' has been all over the place since its appearance in the summer – it's already appeared in 15 sets in White, Olive Green or Dark Bluish Gray and plenty more colours have already been spotted in 2014 sets. Aside from the obvious benefits of having such a wee curved slope available, it also seems to get used in official sets as a simple way of additionally securing a plate onto a larger plate. As shown here, its curve matches other existing bows, and this family is growing fast - a 2X2 version (15068) will soon be with us.



I'm cheating a little by including this - it's not a new part, as printed versions appeared in many 2012 Star Wars™ sets. But it is a new element, in that 2013 saw the introduction of this part without any printing on it, in White and Light Bluish Gray. BrickLink named this part a 'truncated cone', which is a good description... and yet it sits in their category of round bricks. Arguably, it should reside in the cones category where you'll find the other truncated cones pictured here. Nomenclature aside, it's a lovely piece with some unusual features. Namely; the diameter of the top (which is about 1.5 studs), the slightly recessed base (like the 1X1 cone has, but the 2X2 cone does not), and the larger 'notch' holes at the bottom. These larger notches allow it to do something rather mysterious – you can offset the part by rotating it 45° and centring it directly on a stud, as shown in the pic. That little trick isn't unique to this part – you can also do this with the 2X2 round brick with grilles (but not the regular smooth 2X2 round brick). But the truncated cone can do something the gridded round can't – as shown, the recessed base allows 1X1 round tiles to sit alongside. What use that is, I don't know, but I hope you find one!



Sticking with truncated parts, here's a truncated half-arch. This excited me more than any other new part this year. Mostly because I've always loved arches (oh how I coveted the plethora of yellow arches in my sister's 375 Castle) but also because two of these make a Gothic arch! This is wonderful news for church builders, but of course releasing a church is something LEGO® have avoided (since 1958 anyway). Instead, this appears in three Lord of the Rings sets, in Black or White. Happily, Gothic arches are not locked to usage solely within this licensed theme; single ones are used as support structures for roofs in City's 60020 Cargo Truck and



the forthcoming 2014 Modular, 10243 Parisian Restaurant. But I know what you're really all desperate for: pink ones, yeah? Fear not. Those will come in the craziest 2014 set yet seen (or indeed, probably ever seen), 70803 Cloud Cuckoo Palace.

Some decorative parts to finish and fittingly enough they come from the Decorator, from Series 10 of the Collectible Minifigures. For me this figure was all about the accessories. His paint roller handle, with its interesting bends, instantly became favoured by Spacers, for greebling or an interesting corner in pipework.

Secondly, his paint can is a new design. The top is identical to the existing 1X1 bucket, 95343, but the sides are straight instead of tapered. Note also, there's no recess at the base like 1X1 round bricks have. So, ignoring the little lumps where the handle attaches, it's a perfect cylinder that is a bit wider than a 1X1 round brick. This makes it an attractive part for detailing, however its usefulness is severely limited by its top, which doesn't connect to anything nor does it allow a 1X1 round brick to slide within. A shame, as this would have made it an extremely interesting part – and even more so if there was a stud in the bottom.



So that's the best of 2013 – well, my favourites anyway. I've listed these 13 parts online in this Wishlist, a neat feature of the Brick Owl site. As for 2014, it's already shaping up to be an amazing year for parts, with the introduction of a new friction ball-and-cup connection system, which has been in development for years. I can't wait.

Tim Johnson is the author of the blog New Elementary and has built for DK Publishing's recent release The LEGO Play Book: Ideas to Bring Your Bricks to Life.

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