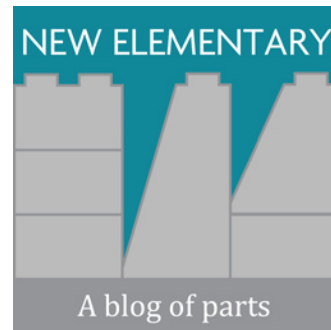


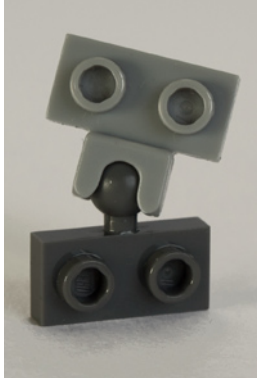
2014: a year in parts

By Tim Johnson (New Elementary)



This year, TLG have once again introduced lots of interesting, useful and downright strange new parts. I'll ignore the strange ones... mostly... and tell you which I think are the most interesting and useful ones to have in your collection.

14418, 14419 & 14704

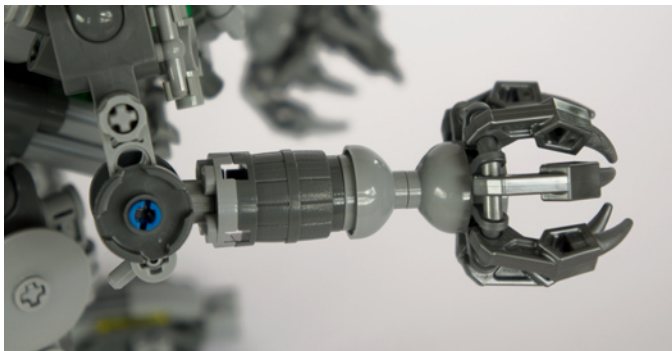


The most 'gamechanging' new parts of 2014 were the family of cup connectors, which bring poseable joints to far smaller models - like the first sets these appeared in, the Chima Legend Beasts. TLG had been fiddling with these designs for years, and what a great final result. Surprisingly (but usefully) the studs are hollow; something TLG have avoided wherever possible in recent years.



My favourite aspect to them is that the corresponding ball size is the same size that TLG have been using for decades, so all older ball parts can be used with the new cups to achieve friction. Bring out your maxifig hands! Next year I would love to see these same parts with the cups rotated by 90°, in case you require joints to move in the other direction.

15395



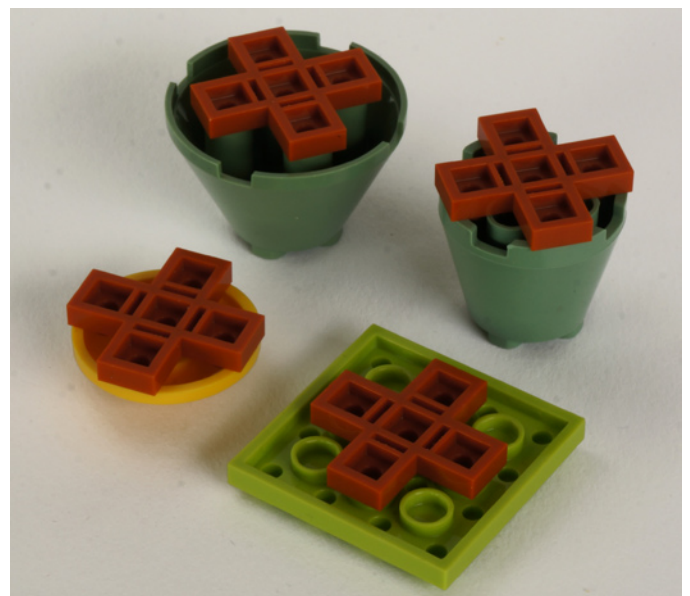
An inverted dome! It's an unusual shape in LEGO and I can't wait for more colours than the four we have so far. I've found all sorts of uses for it already - as have TLG: a flowerpot, a bomb, a fountain bowl, a stool, a method of keeping removable rooves in place, a giant toilet plunger, the part of an Exo Suit arm that isn't a barrel and, as ever thanks to Friends, a toilet bowl.



15397



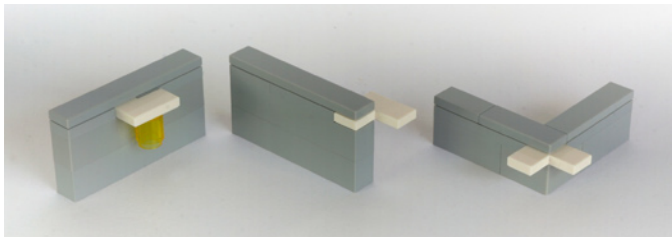
The symmetry of the new 'cross plate' is enough to make me love it, but at first I did wonder as to how useful it was. TLG use it exclusively in Friends sets at the moment and almost always for trees: it's perfect for locking down all those unsteady half-arches that make up trunks. So why TLG chose Dark Orange over Reddish Brown is mysterious - I hope we see more colours at some stage. It also fits nicely in the underside holes of certain parts, pictured here - the 3x3 dish being my favourite.



14719



Again, many AFOLs commented that a corner tile is a wholly unnecessary part, but I disagree. If you're topping a wall that is one stud wide with tiles, this adds a lot more strength to the corners. Purely visually, it's a lovely piece to use in a model (but currently only comes in White and Light Bluish Gray). Or if for some reason you wanted a tile to project outwards from a wall, the corner tile offers some unique options.



15070



TLG have gone crazy for teeth and claws in 2014. I'm not a big fan of such parts but have to admit new releases like 15208 and 15209 are interesting, however the one that's made my list is 15070, which so far comes in White and Yellow. Shaped like a bracket, it lays a vertical tooth over the front of a brick, which can produce several interesting effects. The shape of its top side is very unusual too.

11214



We all have those frustrating moments during builds when we find ourselves saying "why don't TLG make the exact part I need for this situation?!" Well this is definitely one of those parts; a double-length Technic pin with axle at the other end. Clearly TLG often find themselves in that situation

too, as it's already used in 23 sets... even a Friends one!

15100



More lovely Technic, and even simpler: a pin with a hole at right angles...not much to say about this except: why wasn't it introduced a long time ago?!

15279



New plant parts don't come along very often, so whilst the unusual shape of this one wasn't to everyone's taste, it was certainly welcomed nevertheless. These already come in three shades of green. I love its decorative shape which reminds me of the Art Nouveau style. TLG made the part infinitely more useful by including a hole that fits a bar, created by the curl of the tip.



15470



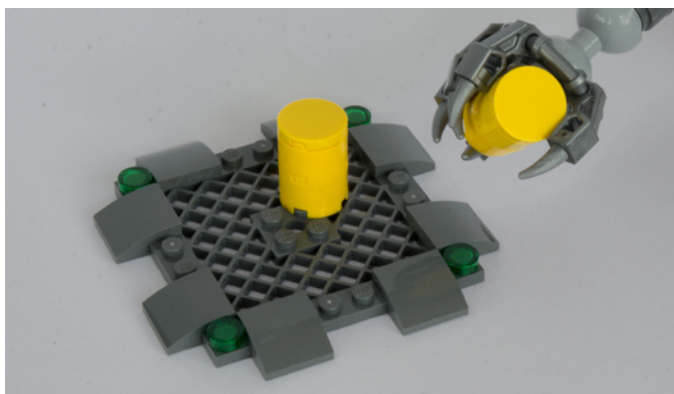


Although small and merely decorative, this swirly part has many uses. In Bright Pink or Reddish Brown it's a yummy cupcake and in Pearl Gold, a grand architectural finial. But TLG's nicest piece usage yet was the Flat Silver one in the citrus press from Heartlake Juice Bar!

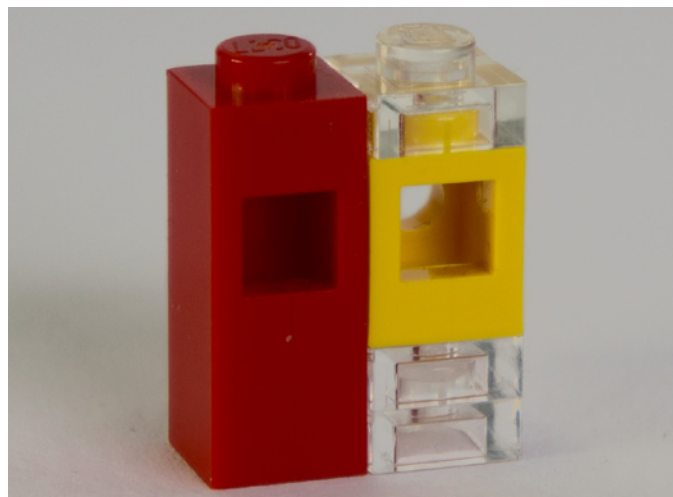
15444

Also shown in the above picture is a Red 1x1x2 brick, known as the 'Piece of Resistance' from The LEGO Movie – or simply the 'Emmet brick'. It comes in Flat Silver too. I feel confident in claiming that this part would never have been designed had it not been needed for the movie. What makes it so very odd is the anti-stud hole on one side; LEGO parts rarely have these – the Erling brick and the inverted 75° slope being two notable exceptions. But what's even stranger about this hole is its alignment: the hole sits one plate lower than you'd expect.

15068



A big sister to the baby bow appeared this year! In 2013 the 1x2 curved slope proved to be an extremely popular new part, and so the extra stability of the new 2-wide version is very welcome. It is both beautiful – as evidenced here by the grille platform in Exo Suit – and functional, being a quick and discreet way of fixing a plate to one below. No surprise that it's already included in 45 sets, in 9 colours!



It was designed this way so that it looked right when attached to Emmet's back and somehow I enjoy the quirkiness of the design, but you're unlikely to find many build scenarios where you specifically need this brick. However, ignoring the hole, a 1x1x2 brick is very nice to have, for the same reasons as the 1x1x3.

14716

No doubt there are some that complain that parts like this 1x1x3 brick are responsible for the "dumbing-down" of LEGO®, since you can make one of these out of three 1x1 bricks. Personally I find aligning a stack of 1x1 bricks about the most tedious LEGO task around and so I love these handy little fellows, and the finished effect looks much cleaner which is especially good for microscale. At time of writing, there are already six colours available, of which you see Red and Light Bluish Gray pictured here alongside 1x1 bricks of other heights.

15706

The "A-plate" nearly didn't make my list. Surely we can just use hinge plates? And it's ugly. But I've relented and included it because I recognise I'm being a bit grumpy. It's certainly an interesting piece and rapidly creates strong support for 45° constructions. The cross supports are cleverly designed to avoid the possible presence of studs on plates attached below and can be made a decorative feature of, such as Black wings on little Ninjago craft... or even this Medium Lavender sign from Heartlake Mall!

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