

# LEGO® Fan Media Days

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures by HispaBrick Magazine® and LCE (LEGO® Community Engagement)



Last May we received an email invitation from Kim E. Thomsen (LCE Team) for an event called the LEGO Media Fan Days. It was an invitation to spend 2 days in Billund for the purpose of making a number of visits and doing interviews with employees from different departments. A total of 13 media from Europe and the USA were invited, including magazines, webs and blogs.

After deciding who in our team would be available for the event we accepted the invitation. A few days later we received more information about the event. On the first day, after a welcome, there would be a visit to the moulding factory and the LEGO Idea House, plus a community lunch and dinner. On the second day there would be a series of interviews. We were offered a catalogue of interviews from which we needed to choose up to 6 different department employees. HispaBrick Magazine requested interviews with every available department. These interviews will be published in the next issue of HispaBrick Magazine, after a final check with the communications department at LEGO.

## Day 1

The first day started with a welcome meeting in which we all introduced ourselves. Kim introduced the Fan Media Days and we had an interesting conversation about the state of the AFOL community.

We had lunch in the famous Pizzeria - Restaurant in the centre of Billund after which the visits started.

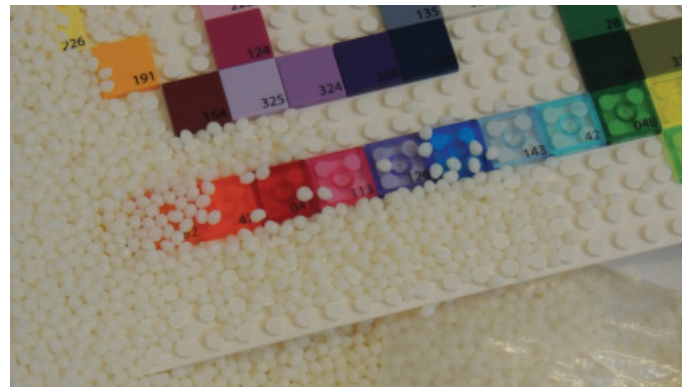
### Moulding factory

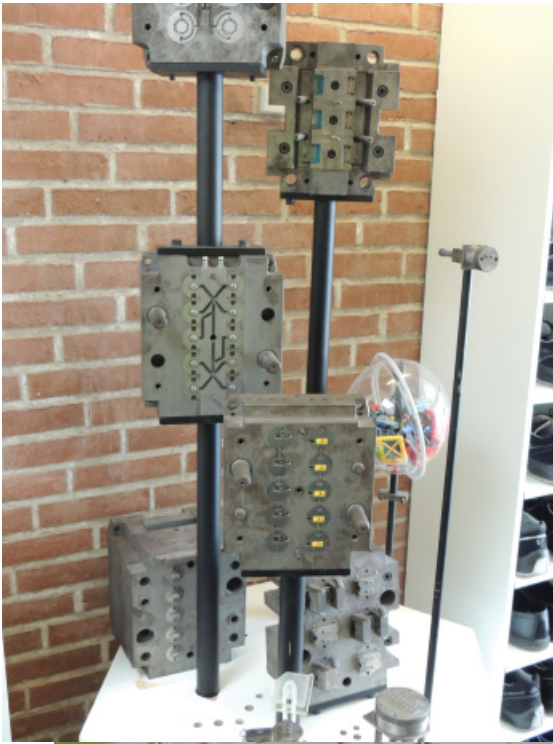
In HispaBrick Magazine 006 we wrote an article about the moulding factory. Would another visit after 7 years offer something new? The answer is a resounding "yes"!

Obviously the factory is still the same as is its purpose. However, now everything is much better prepared for visits, more areas can be visited and there is a lot of information available.



We had to put on a reflective safety vest and Kim explained how bricks are moulded. Then we entered the factory. Because these were the Fan Media days we were allowed to take pictures and video inside the factory. Obviously we took maximum advantage of this opportunity since this is usually not allowed.





**LEGO**

**Maskinvedligehold**  
Machine maintenance

Ansvaret for reparation af alle Kommarkens udstyr, transporttøler (FRGG), materialvaretag og Etnemhjælpert.  
Responsible for repair of all equipment, transportation (FRGG), material installation and safety equipment at Kommarken.

Der foretages systematisk vedligehold på alle maskiner og udstyr, for at opnå stabilitet i produktionen og længst mulig levetid på udstyret.  
Preventive maintenance is carried out on all machine and equipment to secure stability in production and to extend the lifetime of equipment.

Antal udstyr Number of devices	19.000
Antal jobs pr. år Number of jobs per year	33.000
Antal medarbejdere Number of employees	75
Antal forskellige reservedele Number of different spare parts	60.000



The factory is almost completely automated, requiring only a small number of employees. For example, for mould maintenance there are a total of 83 employees and for general factory maintenance 75.

Bricks are made from uncoloured granulate and colour is added when the plastic is heated in the moulding machine. In addition to the plastic that is used for bricks, almost 30 different kinds of plastic are used for moulding things like tires and windows. This plastic is stored in 24-ton silos and is distributed to the moulding machines through tubes. For little used colours there is coloured plastic that can be moulded directly, without adding colour, because colours need to be precisely adjusted to ensure the colour of all bricks is as similar as possible.

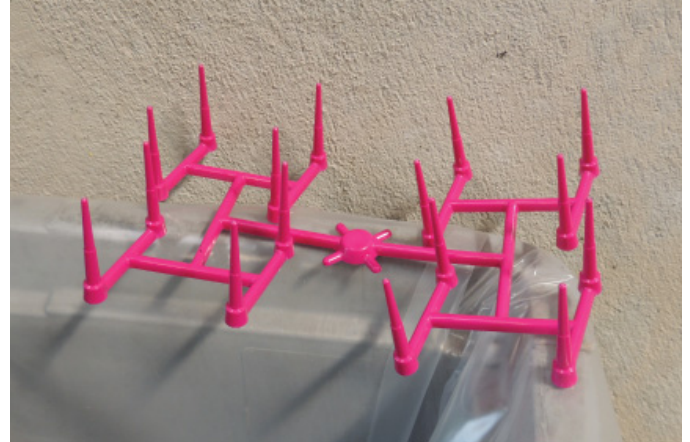
The moulding machines are new, but maintain the same characteristics as the old ones, ensuring full operational autonomy, with robots that automatically load and unload the containers with the moulded parts. Samples are taken from every machine for quality control. Those parts are then discarded, even if they are perfectly OK.



You are not allowed to touch anything as this might contaminate an entire batch of parts. For example, if anyone has the flu and touches a part that comes out of the moulding machine, the virus could end up in a box and be "sold", creating a global flu pandemic. I know it sounds exaggerated, but it makes sense. On the other hand, if there are bricks on the floor these might indicate a problem with a machine and taking them would remove vital clues for solving the problem.



An important aspect of the factory is recycling. Currently, 99.7% of residues are recycled and they expect to reach 100% in a few years. The principal obstacle is that plastic loses properties if it is reheated several times. The percentage of reused plastic in each injection process is limited as it could affect the colour of the parts and they might end up looking marbled or have defects.



Another interesting area, and one I hadn't seen in my previous visit, is the mould warehouse. It contains hundreds of moulds, ready to be used in production when required. They were absolutely clean. There is a hoist to load the mould when it is required as some can weigh a ton.



Finally we went to the chaotic warehouse, where the containers that come from the moulding machines are stored. A computer keeps track of where each part is stored and provides the necessary boxes when they are required. Each stand is 73 m long and 12.8 m tall. It is really impressive to see millions of bricks in the warehouse, and how the robots never stop storing and recovering containers. Oddly enough

there was nobody to keep an eye on them. The computer takes care of everything.



On our way out we received a 2x4 brick with "Moulding Billund" on one side and "I was here" on the other.

### The LEGO Idea House

The second visit of the day was to the LEGO Idea House. For now it is still a private LEGO museum which can only be visited by direct invitation from LEGO. There we found an overview of LEGO history, from the first wooden toys to the Porsche 911 GT3 RS. We already dedicated an article to this museum in HispaBrick Magazine 006 so I won't go into more detail. As a novelty in comparison to my last visit I saw a room with clone brands, where original sets are shown alongside copies made by other companies.

You can also see Ole Kirk Kristiansen's office (Founder of LEGO) with its original furniture, as the LEGO House is integrated into the original house of Ole Kirk.



After the visit we went down to the Vault, where we enjoyed taking pictures with our favourite childhood sets - the ones that made us fall in love with LEGO. The visit to the Vault was longer than expected, but even so it felt really short to all in attendance.



When we came out of the LEGO Idea House we all received a commemorative minifig and went for dinner. After dinner we continued our conversation in one of the bungalows that were provided for the AFOLs attending the event.



## Day 2

On the next morning we met in front of the Innovation House at 9 in the morning. We had the first floor to ourselves for the interviews. After a briefing with the rules for the day the interview marathon began.



There were 7 different departments represented.

- LEGO Technic
- LEGO Bionicle
- LEGO Nexo Knights
- LEGO House
- LEGO Ideas
- LEGO Rebrick
- LEGO Worlds

We had 30 minutes for each interview, and there were 9 slots available, so we had some free time to talk as attendants and discover some of the history behind each medium.

I would like to thank the employees for their patience in answering the same questions over and over again. We also had a chance to talk to them informally over lunch.



At the end of the interviews we took a group picture and I went on my way to the airport to go back home.

I think this initiative is really interesting and has allowed us to do a good mix of visits and interviews which in any other format would have been impossible to accomplish. I would like to thank all the AFOLs who attended the LEGO Media Fan Days for their companionship and the great time we spent together, and especially Kim E. Thomsen of the LEGO LCE team for organising this event, which was an absolute success.

HispaBrick Magazine already looks eagerly forward the LEGO Media Fan Days in 2017.

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