

Space Interview

By Kockice

Wandering around the 'Bricktastic' event halls we stumbled on some of Britain's finest space AFOLs, Jason Briscoe, Gary Davis, Rhys Knight and Peter Reid. Let's try to find out if they have anything new to share with us – some new project or collaboration perhaps?

Kockice: So guys, first something about yourselves, a tiny bit maybe? The infamous 'dark ages'?

Jason: Sure, I mean it might take way too long to explain how it worked in my case, as I was active in the community for a while and then had a ten year relapse...

Rhys: Yeah, well Peter really never had a dark age. We seem to have pulled each other out of our dark ages.

Peter: (laughing)

Jason: For me, Classic Space and the first LEGO® Technic sets were my favourite things when I was a kid. There were some other items on the menu but you always get back to the things you really like the most.

Rhys: Same here, yeah. It was something that caught your eye immediately.

Peter: Yeah, for me it was the Galaxy Explorer (928) that got me going. Sort of sent me on my way.

Gary: We would also need a fair amount of time for my case...

K: As Classic Space builders, do you feel that it appeals to only a certain type of audience, reminding them of the old, better times? The 'romantic' ones?

Rhys: Yes, I think so. A lot of people who aren't AFOLs and who played with LEGO® as children recognize the symbol immediately.

Jason: I think it's different things to different people. There are those who have to have all the Classic Space sets that were ever made and catalogue them. Which is great, but that's not really where we are. So, taking the romanticism as a point, it's the future that could never be or could have been.

Gary: I had one build displayed in an LBR Store but I'm not a typical Classic Space builder. I just liked Jason's idea very much. And about the appeal, it's about what was popular when each of us were children. It all goes back to that. So, yes you could say it's a romantic thing, sure.

Rhys: The reimagining of what Classic Space theme would be like now, exploring the unknown. A different style, a different level. There is a lavish background to Classic Space. A lot of background work, And of course we have Peter.

Peter: Yeah, true. (laughing)

K: So building Classic Space, do you feel most rewarded by the public? How does the Community respond to your work? Do you think if you changed and built something else, they would change how they feel? You're all great builders.

Rhys: We might do that. But we would just revert to Classic Space eventually. No need to go out of our comfort zone for too long! We've got a clear colour pallet and we actually don't have to think too much about the hows and whats.

Jason: It's like your old comfortable pair of shoes. You always go back to it. But I like the idea of putting in some new perspective to Classic Space. Hence my mix up of the white with trans yellow as seen on a few of my MOCs like the 'Mooncat'.



Gary: I really enjoy all my work that gets displayed to the public. Of course we build for ourselves, but it's always great to get positive feedback.

K: So, the display! Who are we missing here; who else is also a contributor? With all the extra details and lighting, it's one of the stars of the show. Can you share how you all came up with the idea?

Jason: Tim Goddard, Alec Hole and Andrew Hamilton are not here today. But originally, it's Peter's idea. He wanted to do something different, a bookcase thing. The idea was there and we were socializing in Skaerbaek when Kevin Gascoigne mentioned that we might do something spectacular for this years 'Bricktastic'. And in that conversation I was appointed as the project manager! Here I have to mention Jeremy Williams, as he was also a culprit for the whole display. We were returning home from that same Skaerbaek when ideas started flying around about the huge tower and the underground. The project seemed to be growing with each sentence (laughing).

K: Well, I guess you have the last word in the whole project, Jason? How were the guys with following the criteria?

Jason: Sort of. It was all very easy going. I gave the guys enough slack to just do what they wanted. But we wanted to show that it's not only the Bricks to the Past team who can do something big. Compared to their huge displays we lack the size. And theirs are historically accurate and of course high quality – we couldn't match that; not the way we wanted to do it. So what we couldn't make with physical size we made up for with details. So it's all about the detail.

Rhys: We all got 'boxes' and dimensions to fill in, and we literally did whatever we wanted! That easy. Of course, as long as it's Classic Space.

Jason: I mean it's not like we don't know each other. If it was with some guys you haven't met and don't know, it would be a difficult project to handle. Well, if I may, one thing that was 'imposed' as a standard was the sliding doors – such a cool design, easy to make, simple – that actually was Alec's idea.

Gary: As Jason mentioned, there were no strict rules. I simply followed the brilliant work of Peter Reid and it ended up being amazing. It's always nice to have flexibility when building.

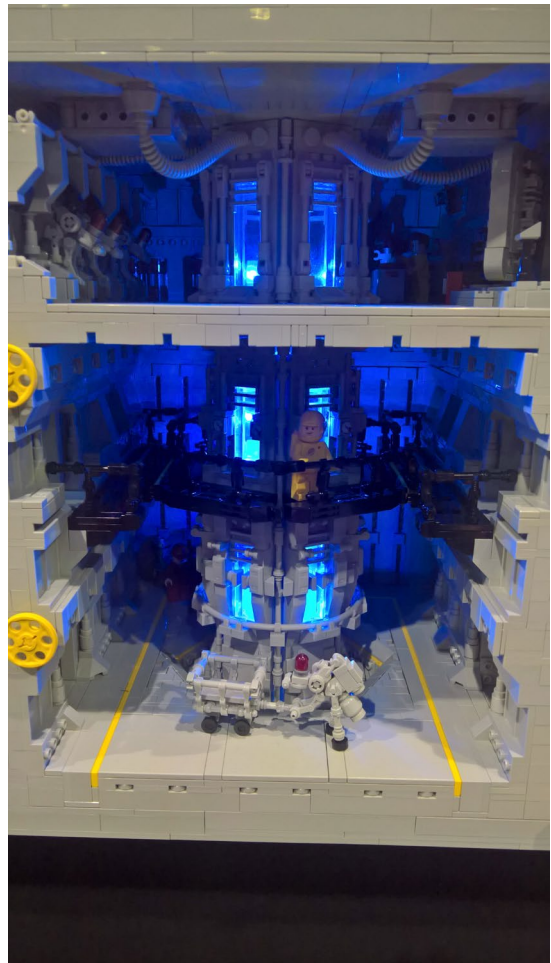
Rhys: I was doing my part and I was keeping all in the loop and sending pictures to the others, then getting the feedback and continuing the work.

Jason: We have put in a lot of effort to show how much detail you can put in that space. And it's really appealing to the crowd. They go by the display, stop for a bit and then keep staring and finding details for ten or more minutes. The yellow highlighted

feature by Alec – turning them left or right opens and closes the sliding doors between the modules.

Rhys: Especially the flashing lights. It's mesmerising to most. Creating a super-detailed display was our goal. In limited space. I didn't really think that we would have that much interactivity with the crowd.

K: Does the inspiration come from TV series or comics? Something special this time?



Rhys: Sci-fi for the genetic laboratory for instance, where experiments are done. Or a Tesla-styled generator. We really got a lot in those 'boxes' (laughing). I mean the whole feel of the display is like an homage to most Sci-fi.

Jason: It's like something you really wanted to make as a kid but you never had the bricks or a chance to do it.

Gary: Since I like Gerry Anderson's shows, there are some references to those shows.

K: Any particularly difficult parts of the project? Anything that made you so frustrated that you would consider leaving the project?

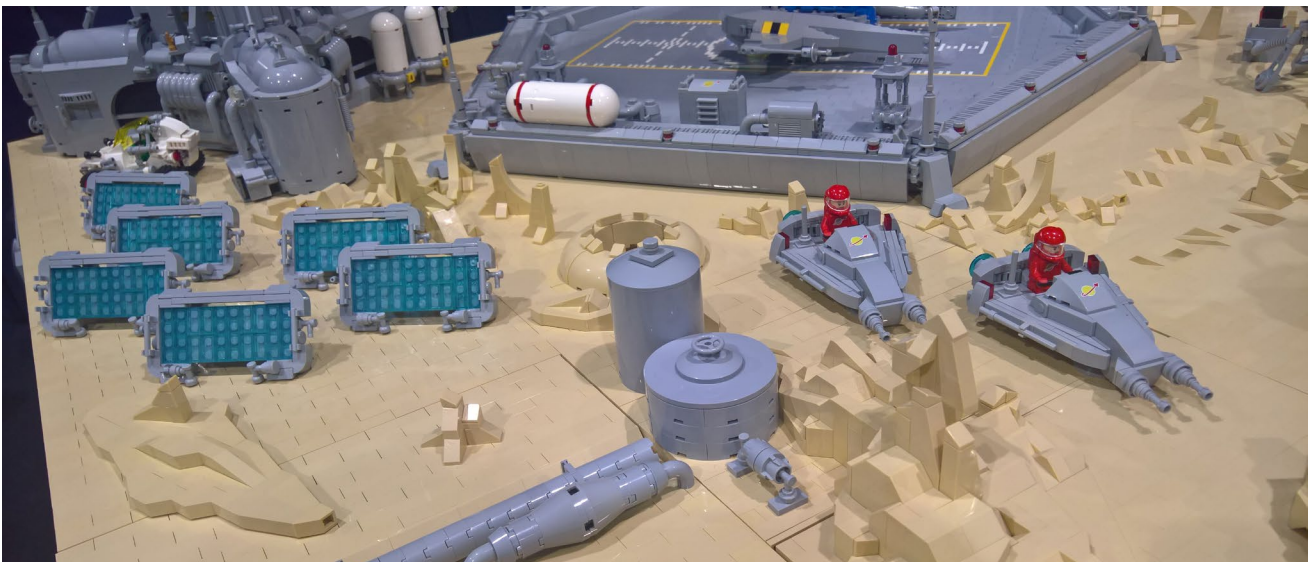
Jason: No, nothing that serious. Well it was a bit tiresome making the tan landscape.

Gary: Ah, yes. It was the rocket lift! It took me ages to get it sorted out with all the different types of rail systems, and I couldn't quite get it going. But the current system – which is quite simple, and I'm sorry I didn't use it originally – is one with the technic rack (BL ID 2428).

K: Does the building go smoothly? Or are you easily distracted, like when the neighbour's dog is endlessly barking?

Rhys: We all create on our own. But I need a bit of noise when building. When I'm working on Sci-Fi I like to have some Sci-Fi on the TV. Sort of a background noise. Because it's people talking, it makes me feel like I'm in the environment with other people. I listen to a lot of Youtube videos and channels. It makes me feel like I'm not on my own, and I might see a technique that I can use.

Jason: I can't have the TV on. I get easily side-tracked from building. But the radio on the other hand, if it's the right music and gives me the rhythm, it's great.



K: Considering it's a fairly large project, did you have any issues with sourcing the pieces? You must have large collections but you still can't have enough LEGO®.

Gary: We qualified for Project Support by LEGO® for this display but the order still hasn't come (laughing), so we had to resource it all by ourselves.

Jason: We had some issues with the tan for the landscape – reaching out to members to borrow some. And grey (laughing). It's amazing how many bricks a project this size can handle.

Rhys: The most used part would probably be the curved macaroni tube (BL ID 25214). I have an order that hasn't arrived yet so I had to leave room for them when they arrive. And I finally got to use the pearl gold ingots (BL ID 99563).

Jason: What a great part those curved macaroni tubes are... I love them.

Gary: Paint roller (BL ID 12885) from the CMF series was greatly used.

K: How did your families react during the time taken creating the display? You must have gotten in the way at some point.

Rhys: My wife is happy that she got her kitchen table back! (laughing). She's very pleased about that. But I did only a small part of the display, a corner one. So when expanding I will go for the bigger module. I've got plans for what I want to do.

Jason: I've managed to keep it in one room so I was blessed. Not too much of a hard time.

K: Do you already miss all the bricks that are in the project, trapped, crying for a new project?

Rhys: I've got no grey tiles, or plates. None left. All gone. I went for the plates and less bricks.

Jason: It's taken a fair dent in my situation. But I'll manage.

K: So the 'boxes' were initially Peter's idea, building in them. There was obviously a plan for the whole idea.

Jason: Well we had some difficulties with the boxes, and for next time we know we have to leave some extra room for brick tolerance. Incorporating the lighting was also quite challenging. But we managed to create the perfect depth for the crowd to see everything we came up with.

K: How are you satisfied with the end product – now, after the first day of attendance and reactions?

Rhys: Considering it was a very loose project I think we've pulled it together quite well. It is our first time, the first step on a bigger journey and improvements are always possible.

Jason: Peter was our 'quality control' guy and pretty loose about it. There was no special micromanaging. Like I've mentioned before, it was about letting guys do what they want. It was a bit of a panic during setup, since the Tower broke on the journey up here. But the number of comments up until now is rewarding and will help us to go bigger next time.

Gary: There was an idea to motorise the doors to open, but I think it's better this way. The public can play with it and it's been pretty popular this weekend.

K: So the future of the project is quite bright. How long do you plan on keeping it alive?

Rhys: Well, we haven't actually discussed it yet. It's all been so loose until now. But it will grow. We'll refine what we currently have and start from there.

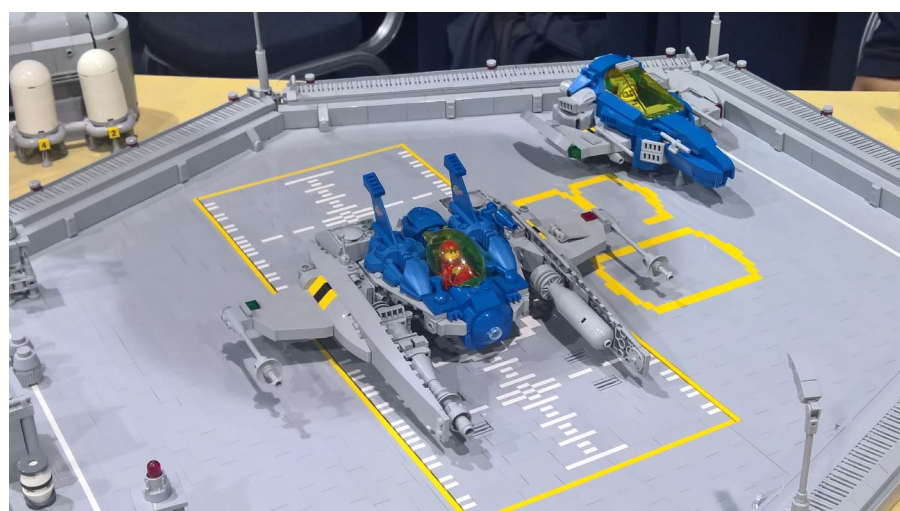
Jason: We're still considering having it travel around to Skaerbaek or Paredes de Coura, but nothing final yet. We will definitely alter it for future shows. Probably see if Luigi (Priori) can join us. We can use eight modules more I think, for starters.

Gary: I will definitely get more work done on making the rocket hatch open and eventually making the rocket come out. Or get it to work with LEGO® Mindstorms. We'll see.

Rhys: It would be cool to fit it on a pallet. Much easier to transport and setup. That's also something to consider as a next step.

K: Are there other builders out there, doing Classic Space, who drive you to be better?

Jason: Sure, I mean Soren (Johansen) makes great stuff. I respect his work, and Luigi (Priori), great stuff with incredible details in his scenes. Simon Liu also, plus many others I follow on Flickr.



Gary: Yeah, Soren's work at Skaerbaek last year was quite impressive.

K: It would be great to see you guys all collaborate in the future.

Jason: Yeah, I mean of course. Even here, there are quite a few people engaged. But maybe for Skaerbaek or Paredes de Coura we will go beyond UK collaborators with our display.

K: So we wish you good luck and hope that more AFOLs will be lucky enough to see it in person!

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