



SR-76. Andreas Lenander
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/124068149@N02/>

BRICK-BUILT WHEELS

By Carlos Méndez

The question of which came first, the wheels or the road, is of course not as philosophical as that of the chicken and the egg. And that is because wheels have accompanied us from the moment in which we first found ourselves having to transport more than our own bodies from one place to another. We can observe in nature how well logs or boulders roll down a hillside, or how dung balls are pushed by a dung beetle, so from there to the wheel we did not have to think too much. And when it comes to LEGO, the story is just as old. Already the mythical wooden duck, which could be named within the first steps of LEGO history, had wheels.

However, it was only around 1964 (sorry if I am wrong but it is difficult to find material from the time) when we were first able to build vehicle models with bricks and wheels. Until then the cars were in one piece, similar to the miniature metal and plastic vehicles you can buy from any toy store. From there, and like everything in life (except the 2x4 brick), the LEGO wheel has evolved in both its shape and its means of

connection. But I'm not going to bore you with an article on the evolution of the LEGO tire. Instead I'm going to tell you about those nonconformist geniuses who have decided that there is no impossible challenge for our favorite bricks, and

that if you have to build a wheel with parts, then you just build it! Tires are a luxury and a shortcut, and not the only way to build a vehicle.

I guess most people, myself included, have already used a round brick or plate as a wheel.



Bulb-O-US. Joeri Ridder
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/128561206@N08/>



Space School Bus. Legohaulic
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/33263295@N00/>

Sometimes this is out of necessity, such as when building alternative models with the parts of a small set and trying to impress our nephews with our technique and imagination. Other times it is a matter of pure aesthetics, as we try to give our MOCs a different look, or a futuristic and

extraterrestrial touch. In the end the reason doesn't matter, only the results. And if you are fond of the LEGO fan community's monthly online events, you will know "FebRover" to be a fantastic source of inspiration for anyone who has decided that standard tires are too boring.

So let's begin filling our brains with inspiration from the creations of these talented geniuses.

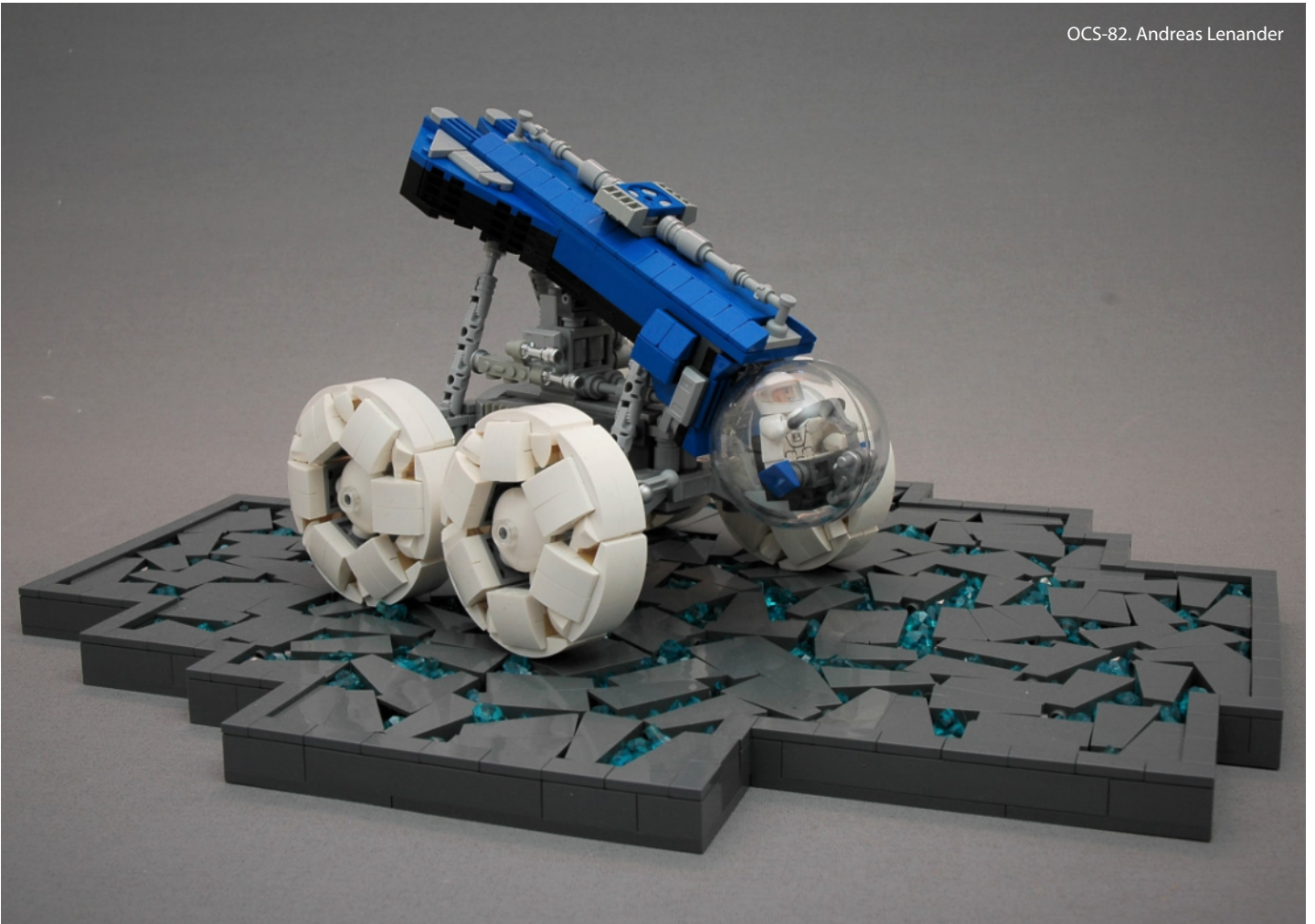
Andreas Lenander's SR-76 and Joeri Ridder's Bulb-0-US Rover are clear examples of the magnificent results that can be obtained simply by finding alternative uses for standard round parts. As Andreas Lenander puts it: "When it comes to FebRover builds in general, I love to build them and I just try to have fun creating a bunch of vehicles in different styles during that month, with the main focus of course being on the wheels. I've done a few brick-built wheels that are 'pretty legal' but most of the more fun ones are anything but! As long as you end up with a circular shape in the end, it doesn't matter how you got there".

However, this concept can also be made as complicated as we want. For example, consider Legohaulic's Space School Bus. The builder himself tells us the following: "I love all the new curved elements and had been wanting to use them. Big oversized wheels seemed like the perfect place. I had a lot of fun filling the wheel hub area with fun spacy greebles. The 10x10 dishes are the same diameter as the curved pieces and the ridges created from stacking them make a fun spacy tread pattern".

Another widely-used technique is to use chain



BT-65. Andreas Lenander

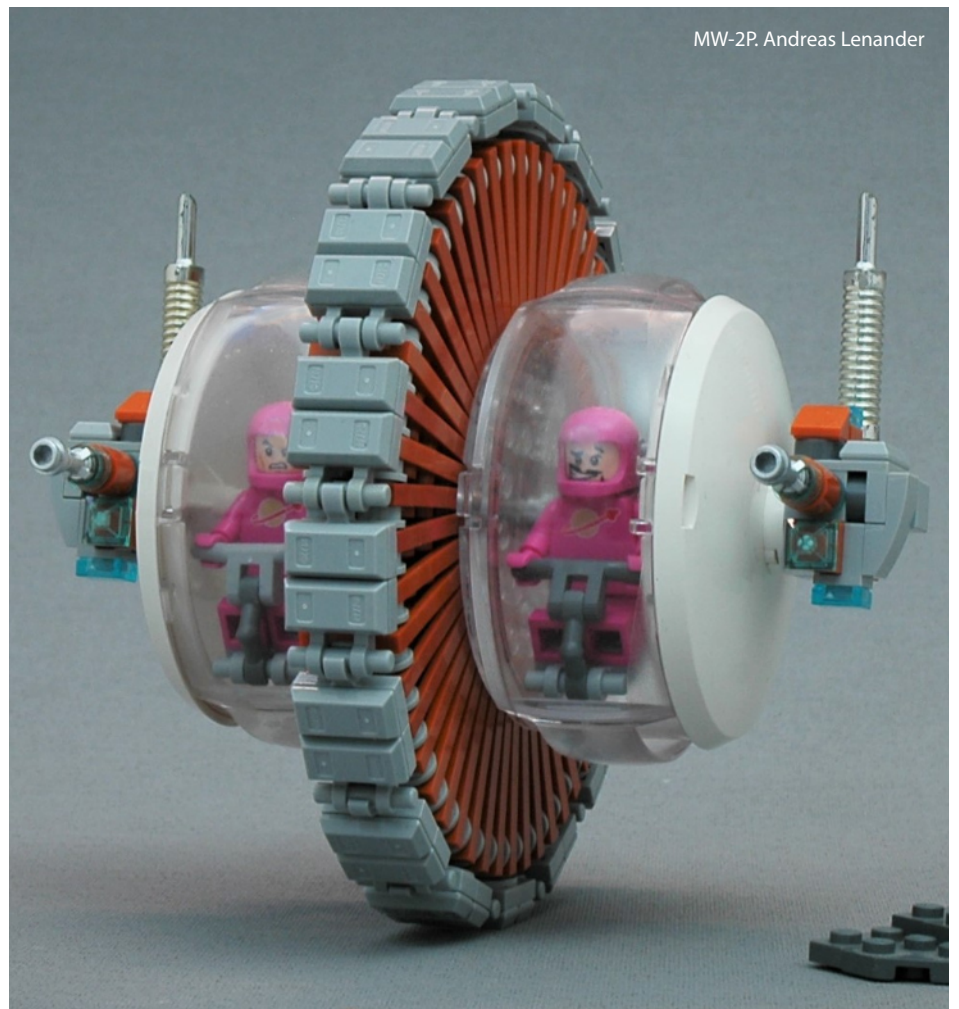


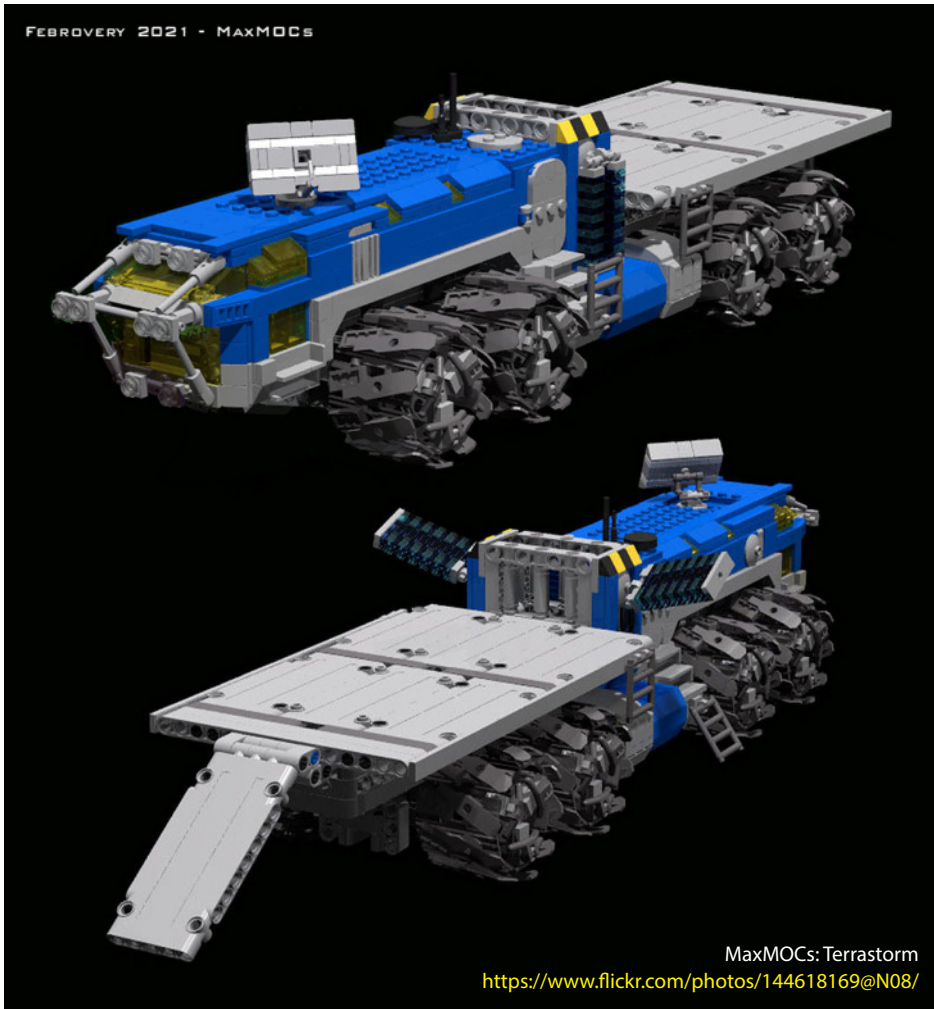
links for outlining wheels, but the particular geometry of large LEGO chain links allows for circumferences to be built without any need for an interior on which to mount them. Taking this to the extreme and giving it a science fiction touch, we can find the BT-65S of our friend Andreas. Here he has taken the concept of the center-axle-less wheel designed by Sbarro in the late 1980s to an epic extreme.

Nor can we forget one of the most-used techniques for making studs disappear in our MOCs where we want a smooth surface, or for taking advantage of certain angles that are impossible to achieve in other ways. I am referring to the SNOT technique that surely you all already know. Yes, it can also be used to build wheels. Andreas' OCS-82 and MW-2P are clear examples.

But why not seek inspiration from other objects with a similar shape? That's what MaxMOCs did for his Terrastorm. He found in a spaceship engine design, by the builder Noblebun <https://www.flickr.com/photos/noblebun/48752491998/in/feed-3625-1613070585-3-72157718249909026/>, the perfect solution for the wheels of his creation.

He adapted the technique and the result is impressive. MaxMOCs gives us their take on brick-built wheels: "I love to build vehicles that are





MaxMOCs: Terrastorm

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/144618169@N08/>



Littlepixel™

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/96081007@N00/>

fictional and sci-fi like in nature, but also evoke believable qualities of real world vehicles. Experimenting with brick-built wheel designs is a fun way to build a plausible wheel design without constraining yourself to Lego tires, and also helpful in that they will teach you some clever techniques.”

And after all this you might ask yourself, what have you saved for last? One word: bananas. Well, do I have your attention? It’s hard to imagine their relationship with wheels, right? I’ll let the creator speak first—Huw Gwilliam, aka Littlepixel™:

“What to say about it? It was very much formed in a strange moment near the end of Febrovery’s creative push and it just sort of popped in there to my head as an idea. I’d previously built a Fabuland “Land Cruiser” buggy with meteorite bricks for wheels a few days earlier and got a great reaction, so I was browsing through the available Fabuland animals looking for inspiration. The monkey seemed fun and in no time I had hatched a plan to build something with it—and bananas seemed the only choice for some fun parts use.

Brick-built wheels have become quite a thing in Febrovery and I guess I wanted to make an impression with something interesting and silly in equal amounts. Once monkeys and bananas were the keystone ideas it came together really quickly—helped by the fact it’s digital and I didn’t have to wait for a crazy banana Bricklink order.

Yellow was the obvious colour, but a bit of Lime for the more unripe bananas helped it feel more its own thing rather than something from the Blacktron theme. The limits of my creativity meant the main chassis was based on the inimitable classic-space 883 moon buggy, but it was a lot of fun welding the crazy gyroscopic wheels to the well known body. And then I chose a helmet, which just had me giggling, and I hoped this feeling would carry through to other people when they saw it.

I love brick-built wheels because it’s such a fun way to add more creativity to a build. Big tires are great and often the perfect choice for a moon-rover, but the option of choosing not to use a big prefabricated tyre/wheel part and instead build something intricate, silly, and unexpected is something I wholeheartedly encourage.”

Well, I hope you have been entertained. I know there are also many more very interesting models out there, and I encourage you to look for them and also to experiment for yourself.

Many thanks to those who have given us their photos for this article.

See you on the road...