



# Cover Shot

By Beverly Thomas, Stuck in Plastic

When Stuck in Plastic were approached to create another front cover shot for the wonderful guys over at HispaBrick Magazine, I immediately said yes. Previously I had created the front cover for the 037 On the Road edition and I loved what was eventually produced. This edition is based on LEGO Knights and I will be honest, I have a soft spot for these little minifigures. Back in 2021, the Stuck in Plastic crew exhibited in The Hermitage, Amsterdam, and we produced a series of individual images that came together in one story.

Inspired by our Stuck in Plastic exhibition at The Hermitage, my thoughts reverted back to the history that surrounds my hometown of Pembroke and how kings and knights once roamed the land. And I decided to write A Knight's Tale to tell the story of Pembroke Castle as I understood it. The plan was to use toy photography to present the results of my research on who was who, and what happened when. I introduced the LEGO Knight minifigures to help represent these historic people, which in turn has put the timeline in order for me and perhaps helped others learn about our wonderful history.



The whole story of A Knights Tale can be read over on our Stuck in Plastic blog <https://www.stuckinplastic.com/2021/07/a-knights-tale/>.

Afterwards the LEGO Knights minifigs ended up back in their box—at least until now, as they have another Knight's Tale to tell and a new castle to conquer. Wales is part of the United Kingdom, and is renowned for its connections to historic castles—many of which are now visitor attractions. And Carew Castle is no exception, with a history stretching back at least 2000 years. As a photographer, this castle has often been a backdrop for

my work, so I went through my photographic library and decided this image was to become the background for the cover shot.

The Raven Knights have reached the outskirts of the castle, but their horses are feeling uneasy. Something has spooked them, and the knights find themselves consoling them before heading into battle.

The setting was made using a cardboard box in the form of a diorama which we covered during a virtual workshop and was also inspired during the Stuck in Plastic 2022 weekly TGIF challenges.

I have used it a few times now and just changed the background image. A simple empty cardboard box can be recycled into dramatic scenes just by using a bit of imagination.

Although I was shooting in a studio environment, I still wanted the image to look like it was taken in natural lighting. So, I diffused some window light and added a small LED portable VL120 RGB camera light, set on daylight, positioned to the right just on top of a photographic diffuser placed completely over the top of the box. This helped eliminate those pesky reflections of light on the wonderful shiny minifigure faces.

I used my Nikon D750 set on a tripod with a 105mm macro Lens attached and an aperture setting of F/3.3. Exposed at 1/10 seconds, in live view enabled me to get the correct exposure I wanted. Because I wanted depth of field, I had to open my lens to f3.3, and doing this helped with the background, but in turn made the figures in the foreground appear blurry except for the one minifigure I was focusing on. To rectify this on the same settings, I chose to focus on each individual minifigure's eye area and then Photoshopped the images to create a sharp foreground. A little tweak in Lightroom then produced the cover shot final image.

