

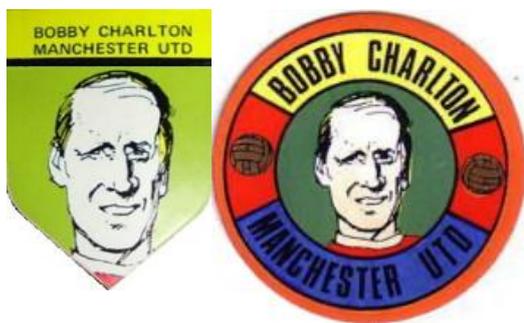
# Nigel's Webspaces News

A newsletter distributed by [Nigel's Webspaces](#), a website dedicated to the history of English football cards 1965/66 to 1979/80.

## BAB and Northern Tracessories

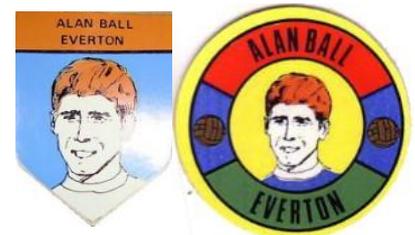
I've written a number of times in the past about the mystery of the [BAB Souvenir Company](#), and the difficulty of identifying their sets and individual stickers. Since the BAB name almost never appears on the stickers it is difficult to be absolutely certain that any one sticker or set of stickers is BAB. Even then, when it may be possible to suggest that they were sold under the BAB name, we still do not know whether or not BAB (now confirmed as a paper printing company) actually designed and printed the stickers, or perhaps on-sold them for another producer.

In the past this website has tried to identify BAB sets and stickers, and then was amazed last year when one set of sets previously thought to be BAB was discovered to be from [Northern Tracessories](#) from Leeds. The evidence for Northern Tracessories (NT) came from two items: firstly they were sold in a shop display with the company name and address details clearly displayed, and secondly they were advertised as 'self-adhesive PVC', whereas BAB stickers tended to be glued paper (as befits a printing company).



But life is not that simple. The shield displayed at left is from the Northern Tracessories set, but the circle to its right is from the [BAB player circles](#) set. The player images are clearly, unmistakably the same. What is going on here?

Adding interest is the crossover between the two sets. Where stickers appear in both the NT and the BAB sets the players images are identical in all cases, with the exception of the BAB stickers often having the shirts coloured, as in the example of Alan Ball.



One of the clues to dating the sets is the transfer of players. Willie Morgan, transferred from Burnley to Man United in August 1968, is shown in United colours and Allan Clarke shown as a Leicester City player, was transferred to Leeds United in July 1969, which dates the set from late 1968 / early 1969 and pre-dates the BAB set. I am aware of 40 different stickers from this set (including two different images of Alex Stepney), though I'm sure that there are more.

The key to dating the BAB set is the Jimmy Greaves sticker. Greaves is featured in the Northern Tracessories set as a Spurs player, and in the BAB set as a West Ham United player. His transfer took place in March 1970, dating the BAB set after this date. This is consistent with other dating evidence for BAB, with no evidence of BAB products before 1970. The BAB set is smaller, perhaps only 30 stickers, though the exact number is not known.



So, what are we to conclude? Firstly, a Leeds-based company called Northern Tracessories produced a set of PVC stickers in late 1968 or early 1969 using hand-drawn images of players. Sometime later the London-based BAB Souvenir Company used the same images as part of their Player Circles set of stickers.

**Editor's note:** When originally published this article had an error in the date of the Allan Clarke transfer. I am grateful to Alan for pointing out this error, which resulted in a re-write of some of the text.

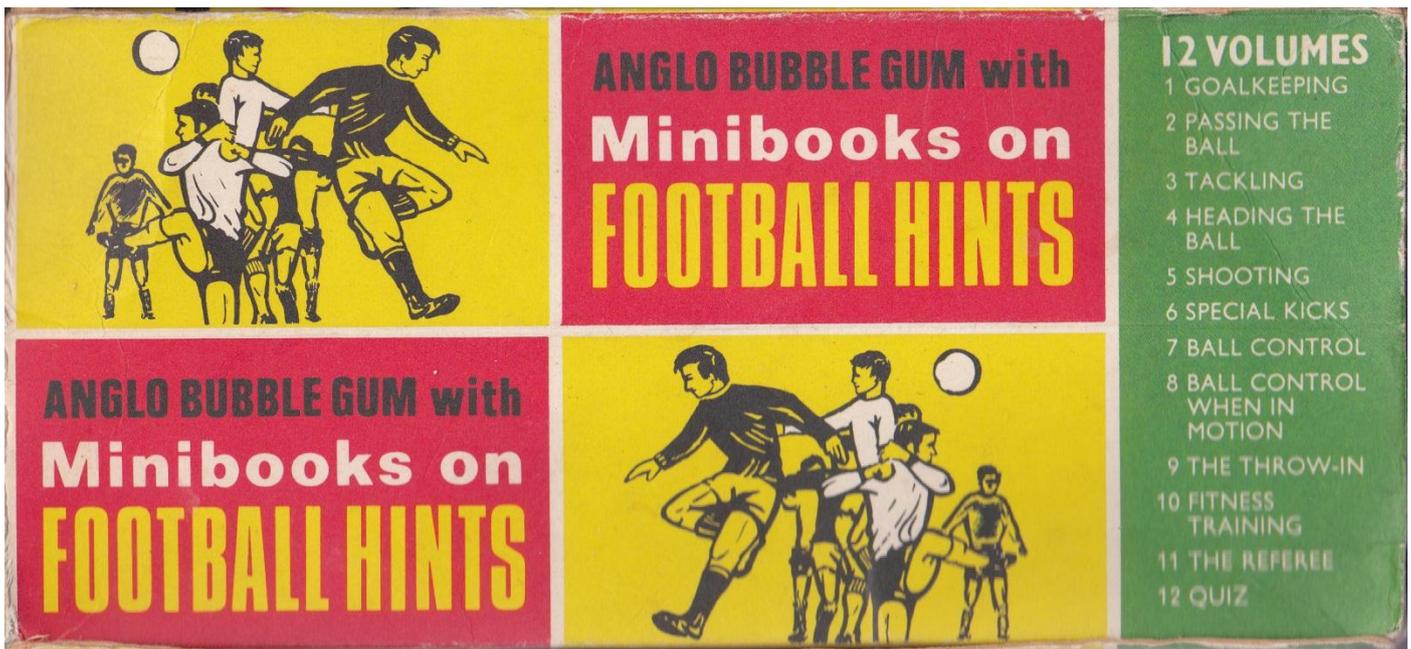
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## Anglo Bubble Gum – Football Hints

[Anglo Confectionery Ltd](http://Anglo Confectionery Ltd) was a company based at Stoney Royd in Halifax. They produced a number of interesting items, including football cards for a brief period from 1969 until 1970. However, they never seemed to hit on a winning formula, perhaps due to the increasing influence of players' rights and contracts for images. After their first set of football cards Anglo went for line drawings rather than player photos.

In 1971/72 Anglo issued a set of 12 'minibooks' on football hints. The books were included with bubble gum and cost 3p each. There were 12 in the set to collect. The image below is from the top of the counter box from which they were sold. The box held 40 packets.



## A&BC Chewing Gum Hobby Cards

[Newsletter Issue 15](http://Newsletter Issue 15) featured the A&BC Chewing Gum Hobby Cards wrapper. Nobody seems to know what they contained, or when or why they were produced. Some readers suggested to me that the wrappers, known to exist in only small numbers, may be fakes. At the time of writing this Newsletter (February 2012) there is a Hobby Cards wrapper offered for sale on [www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk). The seller says:

'This is the only example I have ever seen in 40 years - one of the rarest wrappers or items of A&BC memorabilia to exist. Most probably issued as a test set issue. NB, this is not a test wrapper: it has been properly produced - manufactured by A&BC to package cards for actual sale. [Nigel's Webspaces](http://Nigel's Webspaces) confirms that a number of shops and newsagents (20) were appointed by A&BC to sell and test market sets to ascertain their popularity (please see extract below). It is therefore fair to assume that this is how the wrapper came to be produced and also account for its extreme rarity. It is possible to see where or how the wrapper had been folded to package the cards.

*"In the 1950s, as part of an increasingly professional approach to their business, A&BC established 20 newsagents and shops for 'product testing'. Most were in the South e.g. London and South Wales. New card sets were introduced and A&BC then basically knew within one week whether they would sell or not. If the shops, and then the company, felt that the sets would not sell then A&BC would not proceed to full production".* (you can read my full article [here](http://here) - Nigel).

An interesting idea that the Hobby Cards could have been a trial, though where are the cards? The seller listed the wrapper on ebay with a Buy It Now price of £1,295.

Until next time...**Nigel**