

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.

The Frank Conway story

The big news since my last newsletter has been the publication of the [Frank Conway story](#). Frank Conway worked in the East End of London in the 1950s and early 60s, with a small shop in Toynbee Street. His son, Alan, wrote the story with some small help from me. It includes some excellent photos of Frank, doing what he did best, buying and selling. You can see from the letter provided by Alan Conway that Frank Conway was Director of Conway Automatics Limited, incorporating a business called Ad-Frames. In this letter, unfortunately undated, Frank writes to 'Dear Ball Gum Operator', and advises that 'we have at last perfected an unbreakable Perspex'.

One of the interesting aspects of the letter is the admission that 'since we are approaching that time of the year when the days are much shorter and breakages of Perspex are more prevalent, you will be quick to realize the benefits of having an unbreakable container which gives full protection to your goods'. Does this suggest that some people, probably kids, would smash these ball gum machines to get to the goodies inside? Surely not.

The unbreakable Perspex vending machines were sold by Conway Automatics for £1 which, according to a website I visited, is £20 in 2014 money, surely not a big price to pay?

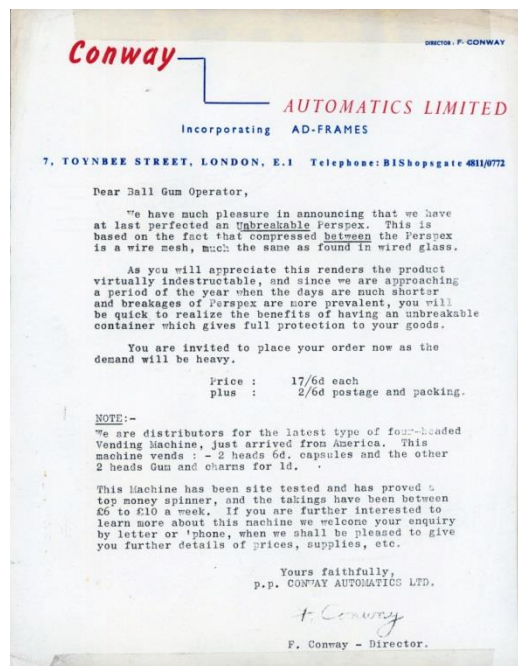
In a note at the foot of the letter Frank Conway explains that he is a distributor of the latest four-headed vending machines, just arrived from America. Two of the heads could deliver 6d. capsules, while the other two heads could deliver gum and charms for 1d. A&BC Chewing Gum began producing cards with their gum in 1954, continuing on through the 1950s into the 1960s and 70s. I know from personal experience that by the mid 1960s they sold their packets of gum and cards through newsagents, directly over the counter. Alan Conway remembers his father selling A&BC Chewing Gum – I wonder if they were ever sold through these type of bubble gum vending machines?

A&BC Chewing Gum letter and album



And while on the subject of letters, Alan Dein sent me this letter which he received from A&BC. In 1971 he entered the A&BC Chewing Gum football competition, but didn't win. Alan observes that they must have kept his name and address, as the following season he was sent a Footballer Album and this letter.

The Album was for the [Club Crests](#) and [Superstar stamps](#) issued with Series 2 and 3 of the 1971/72 Purple backs. The letter suggests that 'just arriving at your local shop is the second part of Footballer, and in every packet this time there is a FREE Club Crest stamp in addition to the cards to stick in your album'. Frustratingly the letter is not dated, because otherwise it would have given us one of the first clues as to exactly when Series 2 was released. The author of the letter is the 'Sports Editor', who happened to be Sheridan Coakley, son of original founder and director Tony Coakley. One of these albums, empty and in good condition, sold on ebay recently for £47.



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Cadbury round stickers



Up until recently I knew little about some round stickers apparently issued by Cadbury. Then an advertisement turned up in a comic, again unfortunately undated, which showed that there were 5 in the set and they were obtained through Cadbury Fudge bars. The stickers were referred to as 'Soccer-star badges', and are today quite collectible.



Things got more interesting when similar round stickers began to turn up, in addition to the original five. The 'new' stickers appeared to be later than the original five, and featured Scottish players. Initially there only appeared to be a few, perhaps again a small set of five, but then more turned up. A suggestion was made that they were issued by Cadbury to coincide with Scotland's appearance at the 1974 World Cup Finals, which seemed to make sense. I wondered whether there might be 22, to match the Scotland World



Cup squad, but then others turned up who were not in the squad. I've built a [gallery for these stickers](#), with lots of gaps, since I'm not sure who is in this set and how many there are. Hopefully over time more will turn up, and perhaps a comic advertisement to make sense of it all. In the meantime, if you can help, please email via the website.

Lyons Maid

Lyons Maid only issued two set of football cards in the period from 1965/66 to 1979/80: the Soccer Stars set of 40 in 1970/71 and the International Footballers set of 40 issued the following year. The Soccer Stars could be stuck to a 'full colour Soccer Star Chart', obtainable for a 1/- postal order sent to Lyons Maid Soccer Chart, 18/20 St. Andrew Street, London E.C. 4. One sold recently on ebay for £27, complete with all 40 cards, surely an absolute bargain.



I'm not sure that there was a poster for the International Footballers. If there was, I've never seen one.

Until next time...**Nigel**