

Nigel's Webspace News

A newsletter distributed by Nigel's Webspace, a website dedicated to the history of English football cards 1965/66 to 1979/80.

Issue 3

Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2010 to all! This edition we feature an interesting A&BC Chewing Gum item, and a fascinating tale of playing football against Premier League opposition in 'My story'.

A&BC Chewing Gum trade promotion

Douglas Coakley has often explained to me the importance of A&BC's network of newsagents and people in the trade who helped to test, market and distribute A&BC products. The image at left, courtesy of website regular Graham, shows a poster for a 1973 competition 'for trade only' to win a trip for two to the 1974 World Cup in Germany. The competition poster was designed and produced by Marketplan (UK) Ltd., and the address for entries was 5 Standard Place, Rivington St., London EC2, suggesting that the competition was organised and run by a marketing company rather than directly by A&BC Chewing Gum.

The main element of winning was naming the 1974 Footballer Personality of the Year, and providing reasons why. The competition closed on November 30th, 1973 (this date is included on the reverse side of the poster). Second prizes were 10 portable TV sets, and third prizes were 250 Waddington Table Soccer games. The poster does not make it clear what was included in the first prize, perhaps airfares, accommodation and match tickets?

The counter box shown on the poster is not included in this website's current counter box gallery, but you can see by the packets inside that they are the 1973/74 blue backs.

For collectors it is these interesting items which go to help complete the jigsaw puzzle of who A&BC Chewing Gum were, how they produced and sold their football cards, and how they operated as a business. Collecting the football cards is fun but, for me at least, adding to the social history is as important.

If you remember any other A&BC promotions, if you ran a newsagents at the time, if you entered this competition, or if you have any other interesting A&BC memorabilia please get in touch.

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Website updates

In the past two months I have been able to add a new gallery of A&BC Chewing Gum [counter boxes](#). These were the cardboard boxes which held the bubble gum packets for sale on the counters of newsagents and sweet shops. Obviously very few survive, but Graham has an excellent collection and kindly sent in some excellent images. Thanks to Graham the website now also displays the 12 known examples of the A&BC Footballer [promotional badges](#).

A number of website visitors have donated lots of new and interesting images recently, and I have a backlog of new pages to add. It will take me a while to get around to them all, but please keep sending them.

Recent observed sales

- An empty [Top Sellers](#), Football 73 album sold for £96.
- The order form from a Panini Mexico 70 album sold for £29.
- A range of A&BC Footballer wrappers have sold for prices ranging from £10 to £97.
- A Panini Euro Football (1976/77) counter box sold for £45.

When you spot what you think are interesting items or prices, either on ebay, in dealers catalogues or auctions, please forward a link or email to cards@littleoak.com.au.

Extra time

If you want to tell your story about collecting football cards as a boy, spending your pocket or newspaper round money only to collect more swaps then please volunteer to be a 'My story' contributor.

Nigel

My story - Kjell Åvendal

My name is Kjell, and I am from Norway. I got nostalgic over English football cards a few days ago when me and my wife visited a friend, his son coming out of his room to show off his 2009-2010 Topps collection. I told his son I collected these cards from the mid 70s, starting off with the last A&BC series in my second year at school. As I knew little about both football and cards, I couldn't see the value of the checklist, and swapped it for another card with a boy, three years my senior. My mates must have told me instantly how stupid I was, as I can recall 35 years later where in the school yard I swapped it, and by whom! My other recollection is that the last card I needed from Topps 77/78 series was Gordon McQueen (no. 251). The same apply here: I know where and by whom I swapped it.

My wife interrupted and told me how daft I am. Of course I am daft, even mad to remember these things, but it tells how important these cards were for a youngster back then. The main reason why Norwegian boys collected these cards back in the 70s was that from 1969 onwards the Norwegian TV screened a match from England live every Saturday. We grew up with the same heroes as English boys the same age. When I got a full time job in the mid-1980s I started travelling across the North Sea, and was close to becoming a member of the 92 club when my wife "rescued" me in the late 1990s.

As mentioned, the last A&BC series from 1974-75 was the first series I collected and completed. After that I collected full series of the Topps collections the next four seasons, but lost out on a few in 1979-80. I have never really bothered trying to complete this series, but might do so in the not too distant future. I collected all cards in the infamous 1980-81 series, and remember how disappointed I was when I opened the first packet to discover Topps



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had split the cards in three. I had now reached my early teens, and this series was the last for me, although I made a comeback in the mid 80s with the Panini stickers, but I never finished any of these albums.

I bought my cards mainly from a small corner shop near my school. I can still remember now, 30 years on, that we ordered "Two packets of football cards and an asshole!", the "asshole" being the local slang for a sweet round bread with a hole in the middle,

similar to a large donut. Living in rural Norway I also bought quite a few packets from a baker's van, delivering bread and groceries to our neighbourhood once a week. All cards I collected back then are still in my possession. The only ones I have sold or given away were a few swaps. I had to test myself the other day, and I was happy that I still knew all the names as vividly as back in the 70s. Whenever I watch a game on the telly today, I won't even remember half the names of players from the likes of Bolton or Portsmouth half an hour later!

Funnily, when I stopped collecting these cards actively around 1980, I started collecting football programmes. Although this collection has taken second priority to family activities the last few years, I still have an ambition to collect all programmes from English first division clubs between 1974-77. I miss only a few from 1974-75 (mostly Derby's newspaper style programmes) and I think I have collected about 450 out of approximately 600 for the next two seasons. I also have a quite large collection of programmes from matches between Norwegian and British clubs, both competitive and friendlies.

Since the days I collected these cards I have supported Liverpool, and I was lucky enough to experience almost unlimited success for my first 15 years as a supporter. Most boys supported Leeds when I started school, but I must have picked up words about a good player called Keegan, because I think he was the main reason why I chose Liverpool back in 1975. When I started travelling to England, I developed a great interest in English football in general, and although I supported Liverpool I didn't always choose their match. Like in April 1992, when I was sure Man United would win the league at Anfield, and rejected an offer for tickets for our match against them. Instead I opted for Sheff United vs. Leeds. As things turned out Leeds dramatic win at Bramall Lane left them only a whisker away from their first championship for 18 years, and as Liverpool beat Man U later that afternoon I had a memorable night at Peter Lorimers pub in Leeds (where I stayed for two weeks that Easter) when all the Leeds lads celebrated like mad.

I still follow English football, but not as closely as I did when I was single. To be quite honest I am a bit tired of a league where the same few clubs occupy the top four spots every year, and it is sad to see that the PL isn't like the old first division where anyone could beat anyone.

By the way, I had a great experience four years ago. I have been involved with my local Norwegian club for some years, as programme editor. In 2005 we played at level 3, and got the chance to play Birmingham City in a pre season friendly. Our board first rejected it, but I would have cursed myself if we had let the chance slip away. So I got their approval, got a couple of sponsors and planned the match almost single handedly. It turned out a great success, with 1,100 people (4 times our normal crowd) seeing Birmingham winning 2-0. I had never got a first team appearance for my club, as I never progressed further than their youth team. Midway through the 2nd half I was called to the dressing room area of the ground. Inside was a kit, together with my boots and shin pads, which had been secretly lifted from my home earlier on the day. Thus, I became the oldest player in Egersund's history to make his debut, at 38, playing the last three minutes, touching the ball once. However, my wife had forgot my contact lenses, so you should have seen the face of Damien Johnson, the Birmingham skipper on the day, when I entered the pitch wearing specs!

My sister took a photo of me chasing the ball, which can be found [here](#).