

# Nigel's Webspaces News

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

## The Esso 1970 World Cup Coins promotional record

[Issue 30](#) of the newsletter featured David Fussell's interesting research and story about the 1970 Esso World Cup coins. In his story David mentioned a promotional record, apparently distributed to petrol stations to accompany the coin promotion.

Side 1 has highlights of the 1966 World Cup Final with commentary by Brian Moore (rather than the more usual Kenneth Wolstenholme version). Side 2 is described as "The Esso 1970 World Cup", with commentary by Brian Moore.

David had managed to get his hands on the 45 rpm 'single' type record with a cardboard picture sleeve, with his copy date stamped by the petrol station with "RECEIVED 16 MAR 1970". But, unfortunately David did not have easy access to a record player. However, another website visitor, Alan Dein, managed to track down the record and a player, and has made a digital recording of Side 2. Thanks to Alan's efforts, I've made a transcript of the recording, which is provided below:



**Brian Moore:** *This is Brian Moore, speaking to you from one of the world's largest mints, as I watch great vats of white hot molten metal being swung round and poured into moulds from which millions of coins will be struck.*

*And moving further down this production line the coins, now cooled to a mere 200°F, are being tipped out of their moulds.*

*You can hear them as they cascade onto a moving belt where any faults can be spotted by the scanners and any imperfect coins rejected.*

*Let's take a closer look at these coins. Not coins of the realm, not fifty new penny pieces, but coins minted specially for Esso. Each of these coins bears the head of a player of the England World Cup squad. This one has Bobby Moore's head with his signature underneath, and this one Geoff Hurst. And as I watch these bright, silvery coins moving past on the conveyor belt I can pick out players like Colin Bell, Bobby Charlton, Francis Lee, and there's Jackie Charlton, Martin Peters, Alan Ball. All 30 players in England's World Cup squad are featured on these coins that will surely be one of the most wanted, most asked for collector's items that any company has ever promoted.*

*Let's leave the mint for a moment and find out more about this great Esso promotion...*

(Brian Moore leaves the mint)

*With me I have an Esso representative....*

*I must say the coins look great, but how are you going to use them?*

**Esso man:** *We're launching a major national promotion which will capitalise on the excitement already building up on the 1970 World Cup in Mexico. Esso have a contract, exclusive in the petroleum industry, with England's World Cup squad, and we're minting millions of coins of the 30 players in the squad.*

*Each coin will be security wrapped, and will be given to motorists buying 4 gallons of petrol at Esso stations.*

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- Brian Moore:** *You mean given away free?*
- Esso man:** *Yes, free. And, of course, if a motorist buys 8 gallons he'll get two coins free, and so on.*
- Brian Moore:** *Does the motorist get something to build up his collection, like a card perhaps?*
- Esso man:** *Yes, he does. The whole point in this promotion is that it is a collection promotion. This means the motorist has to keep going back to Esso to get the other England players to complete his World Cup squad. More sales for the dealer.*
- Brian Moore:** *Yes, I see. But will each player be equally available?*
- Esso man:** *No. Experience has shown that if the collection is too easy to complete, people lose interest. Therefore we will keep some of the players in short supply.*
- Brian Moore:** *Now you said earlier something about the coin being security wrapped?*
- Esso man:** *Yes, each coin will be in a sealed envelope, and it will be impossible to see who the player is inside. In that way, we will keep the excitement going.*
- Brian Moore:** *What makes you so sure that the World Cup will have the interest of motorists, that they will want to collect the Esso coins?*
- Esso man:** *In 1966 it's estimated that over 400 million people in the world watched the World Cup Final on television. Even women, who had never been interested in soccer, suddenly became fans and had their heroes. In 1970 all the television companies have made their plans for covering the whole series, and reckon on something like 200 hours of television time.*
- Brian Moore:** *(Laughing) Yes, I know that well enough, in fact I shall be working hard on the World Cup for ITV. But do you think the Scots, the Welsh, the Irish, that they will be rooting for England?*
- Esso man:** *Well, I hope so. I don't think there's any doubt that the coins will be popular all over the British Isles.*
- Brian Moore:** *Now one thing I'm not clear about... these collection cards?*
- Esso man:** *Well, as I said, the coins will be free to motorists who buy 4 gallons of petrol. They will also be given a free collection card with the names of all the England players and holes for each of the 30 coins to be slotted in. There is a stronger, more luxurious, collection card which will be available for sale at an inexpensive price.*
- Brian Moore:** *But when is the promotion going to break?*
- Esso man:** *Dealers will be kept informed by their area representatives, but it will break to the public at the beginning of April. And, by the way, if the rep doesn't call, the dealer should ring him. Dealers must get in on this promotion.*
- Brian Moore:** *The World Cup games start in Mexico on May 31<sup>st</sup>, the Final is played on June the 21<sup>st</sup>. What if England are knocked out early on?*
- Esso man:** *Well, you should know Brian, because the early matches are played in leagues, England can't be knocked out until June 11<sup>th</sup>.*
- Brian Moore:** *Touché. At any rate, let's hope we keep the Cup and certainly the promotion sounds very exciting.*
- Esso man:** *Well, it's without doubt the most tremendous promotion. It has everything going for it: it's topical, and it has maximum appeal. The coins have an intrinsic value, people will want to collect them, and*

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*keep them as commemorative coins. Families will swap them, and motorists will shop around for players in short supply. We think it's got everything.*

*But, of course, like all good ideas, to be a success it's got to have everyone behind it. Everyone has to be enthusiastic. The forecourt material has to be put up, and the coins must be given out for 4 gallons without motorists having to ask.*

(Brian Moore and the Esso representative return to the mint)

**Brian Moore:** *Well, they're attractive all right. May I have a set?*

**Esso man:** *No, I'm afraid you'll have to drive to your Esso station and buy 4 gallons of petrol like everyone else.*

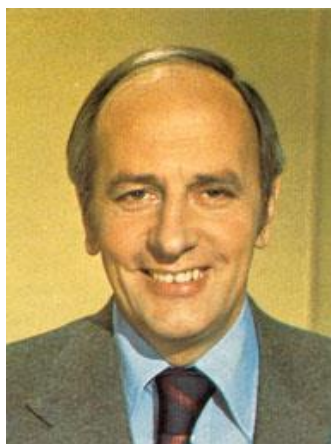
**Brian Moore:** *And I'll do just that.*

*Well good luck Esso, and good luck to everyone participating in the World Cup coin collection.*

This is obviously a fascinating piece of social history, and I am very grateful to Alan Dein for tracking it down and providing his digital recording.

Here is my take on the inside story of the recording:

1. I don't think Brian Moore was actually in a mint. I suspect he was in a recording studio with sound effects supplied.
2. Esso representatives don't have names that are important.
3. All motorists are men, according to Esso.
4. You may be surprised to know that there is no such thing as 'security wrapped'. Esso (or their marketing people) invented it. Try googling the phrase and see what turns up (hint – nothing!). But then again, wait a few weeks and this Newsletter will turn up in Google as the original source of the written phrase. Magic!
5. According to Esso, people lose interest in things that are too easy to complete, which perhaps explains why Fermat's Last Theorem took so long to solve. In response to this, Esso chose to withhold certain player coins, making it devilishly difficult to complete a set.
6. In spite of Esso's devious activities in 1970 by withholding an unspecified number of unnamed players, it doesn't seem to have stopped everyone I know completing their sets. Check ebay if you don't believe me.
7. Esso were, in 1970 anyway, a tight-fisted company who wouldn't even let Brian have a free set of the coins.



And, as we all know, England weren't knocked out on June 11<sup>th</sup>, progressing through to the quarter finals where they were knocked out at approximately 1.45pm on June 14<sup>th</sup> (Mexico time). I wonder what the Esso executives were thinking at the time.

38 year old Brian Moore made his name on ITV at the 1970 World Cup, helping the station beat the BBC for the first time in live sports broadcasting. He went on to a long and celebrated career as a football commentator, perhaps all given a boost along by his work with Esso. I wonder if he ever did complete his collection of Esso coins, or if he ever worked for them again? He died in 2001, aged 69.

*(Brian Moore image sourced with permission from Nick at <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/carousel/BigMatch.html>, an excellent website).*

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Until next time...**Nigel**