

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.

Issue 5

[Last month's issue](#) featured a number of 'mystery items' about a few of which, I am glad to say, we are now better informed:

- The Superstar poster mentioned on the A&BC Chewing Gum 1970/71 set wrappers does appear to be for the pin-up posters from the Scottish set. Nobody was able to definitely confirm this, but then again nobody suggested that it was the wrong solution.
- The Top Team photos mentioned on the 1974/75 A&BC Chewing Gum wrappers are included as part of the set of cards, not added in as extra items. Of the 22 teams featured in the English Red backs set only 12 have team photos (see Burnley example at right) and similarly in the Scottish 1974/75 green back set of 132 cards there are 12 team photos (Aberdeen, Ayr United, Dumbarton, Dundee, Dundee United, Hearts, Hibernian, Kilmarnock, Morton, Motherwell, Rangers and St. Johnstone). Importantly this also serves to confirm the view that A&BC Chewing Gum used the same wrappers for their English and Scottish cards each year (with the likely exception of 1970/71 mentioned above).
- Nobody could throw much more light on the A&BC Lucky Bags, which supposedly included crinkle-cut purple backs. Steve can remember that the purple 'crinkle cut cards exist, as I remember these from my schooldays but can't remember where I got them from, or the year of issue'. The conventional wisdom has been that only Series 2 cards (110-219, minus the checklist 170) exist as crinkle-cuts, and they were cut with the same machine (apparently if you stack them up the cuts line up). However, it has previously been suggested that this occurred in 1974 when A&BC were winding up and handing over their equipment to Topps. Personally I doubt that these 1971/72 cards would have sold in 1974, so I suspect that they would have been created in 1972 or 1973. Douglas Coakley, one of the original A&BC Chewing Gum directors, remembers that 'at one time we had lots of excess stock so decided to create 'lucky bags' (he used this term) with lots of A&BC 'goodies' which we then sold through our distributors'. In the next edition of the newsletter I hope to be able to display a 'Cup Winners' bag which may have been one of these 'Lucky Bags' (since no images of Lucky Bags are known to exist).

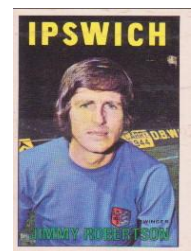


Nobody seemed to know anything about the Top Sellers Football 73 'extra fun stickers'.

There was a very generous response to my request for images for the A&BC Chewing Gum action transfers / transparencies, leading to a new [gallery of the complete set](#). Many thanks to all of those who contributed. These attractive items, believed to have been printed for A&BC by Letraset, were only in the English set and regularly sell now for £9 each, so owning a full set of 72 is a real treat (which reflects poorly on my personal collection of 6!).

A&BC Chewing Gum - English and Scottish set production times

A chance email from Martin has led to an interesting discovery about possible production times for the A&BC Chewing Gum English and Scottish sets. Martin pointed out that Jimmy Robertson was card 86 in Series 1 of the 1972/73 English Orange/Red back set, shown as an Ipswich Town player (pictured), and card 65 in Series 1 of the 1972/73 Scottish blue backs set, shown as a Stoke City player. Robertson transferred from Ipswich Town to Stoke City in June 1972. Previous wisdom has suggested that A&BC designed their Series 1 football cards in time for the season start (August) by designing their cards around May/June. The fact that the English set card stayed as Ipswich Town suggests that perhaps A&BC completed the English set first, then worked afterwards on the Scottish set, perhaps not noticing before they were issued that Robertson has been transferred. In previous years A&BC would have corrected the card via a redesign or reprint, but they don't seem to have done that in their later years.



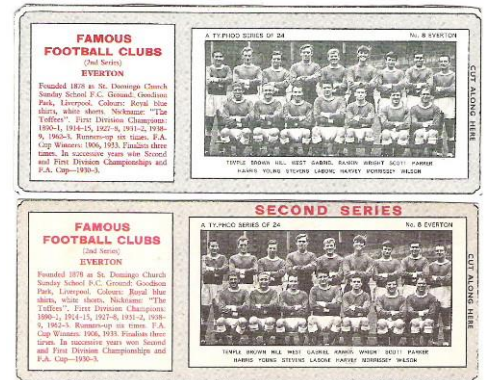
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Typhoo tea, Famous Football Clubs, Series 2 mystery

Earlier this year John wrote to Nigel's Webspaces with a question about the existence of two different versions of the Typhoo Tea, 1965 Famous Football Clubs, Series 2, packet issue cards (see pictures).

The card shown at the top has no red lettering above the team photo, while the one below has 'Second Series' in red. John has more of the second type than the first, whereas all the cards in my set are of the first type (without the red lettering). What do other collectors have in their collections? Are there any other Typhoo packet issues with the red lettering?



Upcoming auction - rare A&BC Scottish cards

As mentioned in the last newsletter [Convery Auctions](#) will be auctioning, on 19 May 2010, the complete set of 44 rare [A&BC Scottish 1962/63 cards](#) shown on this site. The Convery website now has a catalogue of auction items online (the cards are Lot 89). The set has a valuation/estimate of £1,500 to £2,000, so it will be interesting to see the finishing price.

Call for images - Sugosa

One of my all-time favourite football card sets is [Famous Footballers by Sugosa](#), produced just after the 1966 World Cup victory. From a design point of view they are nothing special, being very similar to [Barratt & Co. cards](#) (to the point where you would lay money that they were produced by the same designers and printers). The attraction for me is the small size of the set (12 cards) and the fact that very few have survived the 40+ years since they were issued. Not many people even collect them, as nobody remembers them from their childhoods. I'm sure that many end up in jumble sales, car boot sales or at the tip each week as lofts are cleared out, but I'm keen to save as many as I can. I've created a partial gallery with the cards from my own collection (6 cards), but would appreciate help with the missing images. If you have any of these cards, and are able to scan them in (150dpi if possible please), then please send them to the website and I will update the gallery.

Recently observed sales

- A complete set of 16 A&BC Chewing Gum [1969/70 World Cup Posters](#) sold for £92, but then a few weeks later another set sold for £36. The perils of ebay!
- An Anglo Confectionery 'Match Gum' chewing gum wrapper featuring George Best sold for £82. The auction item listing noted 'This is the reason why no A&BC cards were issued of him after 1968 George had signed a contract for Anglo and A&BC has lost the rights to issue gum cards of him from 1969'.
- A BAB player circle of Ron Davies sold for £19.50.
- 110 Top Sellers, Football 72 cards in VG condition sold for £41. I'm continually surprised that Top Sellers cards are so much less collectable than A&BC Chewing Gum cards. Perhaps their time will come one day?



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.

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A&BC Chewing Gum and Master Vending



Graham recently sent in this fascinating image 'which A&BC apparently used to send full of cards to other companies'. The seller had told Graham that it contained 1000 cards for the firm MASTER VENDING. The series was 'Jet aircraft of the world' (issued in 1958). The box still has the address label on: Master Vending Machine Company Ltd., Cricklewood Lane, London. Graham wanted to know more... Graham noted that Master Vending only produced cards from 1958 until 1959, a total of eight different sets, two football related.

Although it was more than 50 years ago both Tony and Douglas Coakley remembered these boxes. Douglas recalls that he bought a machine which could vend a piece of ball gum and three picture cards. He then sold the machine to Master Vending who, in turn, contracted A&BC Chewing Gum to produce the ball gum and print their cards (hence the box to send the gum and cards). Tony Coakley remembers that the blank cards used by Master Vending were last year's spares from A&BC Chewing Gum, although he also remembers that there were problems with the machines dispensing the gum and cards. Douglas Coakley remembers that Master Vending went into liquidation, but fortunately at the time there were no debts owed to A&BC Chewing Gum. How fortunate we are to have Douglas and Tony still able to remember these little tales!

Extra time

This edition's My Story contributor is Barry. Barry is, if I may say so, a fanatical collector of A&BC Chewing Gum wrappers and has supplied most of the wrapper images shown on Nigel's Webspaces. When I first re-started my A&BC football cards collection in the late 1990s I was surprised to learn that the occasional wrapper still survives intact. With Barry's help I have come to discover that there are many, many varieties of many different wrappers. I think Barry intends to collect them all ☺

Nigel

My story - Barry Beckett

Life started for me in February 1958 in the small village of Tuddenham located outside Ipswich in Suffolk. The village had a population of 300 people, a pub and a small shop. If we wanted anything "sophisticated" by way of entertainment, such as a cinema, a restaurant or "big" shops, we would have to travel by bus into the great metropolis of Ipswich (population 150,000).

Entertainment was limited to playing around by the small river Fynn that runs through the village or kicking a ball around on a rather lopsided and uneven field that was referred to as "the meadow" and was really only fit for cattle grazing. But, that's all we had so we made the most of it. Football was everything for the 15 or so boys who lived there. Ipswich Town FC are still the local club and everyone was a fan...we all wanted to play for "The Town" ! Throughout my life I have been an ITFC supporter and have seen the highs the team achieved in the late 70's and early 80's under Bobby Robson and the lows of more recent years. Football can be a fickle friend!

During my childhood, the small shop that also doubled as a Post Office, was really a converted house (and is actually now just a house again) so it was very limited in its selection of items for sale but they did have all the traditional sweets prevalent during the 1960's in England; Jamboree Bags, Sherbet Dabs, Jelly Babies, Black Jacks, Caramac....and bubble gum cards.

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The first cards and full set I can remember buying and collecting was the "Superman in The Jungle" series from A&BC in 1968. I still have that set of cards ! I can also remember my younger brother collecting the "Plant of The Apes" set in 1968 too.

But it was football cards that were really the passion for everyone. I can remember being given a stack of the 1967/68 A&BC "Star Player" football cards and being fascinated by the Ian Storey-Moore card as this was the first double-barrelled name I had ever seen!



As with many young lads, logic did not always play a big part in patterns of thought, so when certain cards seems to be very rare, it only made sense to go to another shop because they were likely to have different cards in their packets! So, I would jump on my bike and cycle the 3 miles or so to the outskirts of Ipswich and go to a small newsagent on Woodbridge Road called "Eric's" (long since closed). Opening the packets and looking for the cards I didn't have was a wonderful feeling, particularly if a few of the rare cards were found ! If Eric's failed me with the supply of cards I didn't have, there was another newsagents in Great Coleman Street (now a hairdressers) that I could get to as they were bound to have them (where was the logic when I needed it?).

Swapping cards was a regular event amongst the lads as everyone wanted to complete the current set. Luckily, I always kept my cards in old biscuit tins and didn't really play with them too much so they have survived in good condition (any poor cards have been replaced in recent years) therefore the vast majority of my original collection are still in my possession.

At the same time as the A&BC sets were available, the very decadent sticker sets and fancy albums from FKS were growing in popularity so I also started collecting those too. The first set I completed was the "Wonderful World of Soccer Stars" (with George Best on the album cover) and I have still have that item in my collection too ! The stickers seemed, at the time, to be more modern than cards, plus they were easier to put into school uniform pockets and carry around to swap with the other kids at school. I kept collecting the A&BC sets and the FKS sets until 1973/74 when music became a more important pastime and my money was spent on albums (the 33½ rpm type) and the new cassette tapes that were taking over the scene for all the cool cats !



After school, the collecting stopped as college, work, marriage and the like took all my time and money so it has only been in the past 10 years that I have gone back to collecting football cards to fill in all the gaps in the collections but also to expand by adding sets that have been produced by various companies since the demise of A&BC. Collecting the wrappers from A&BC and Topps football sets is the current challenge for me and I have been lucky enough to find a lot of them and help Nigel to display the variations on his fine website for everyone to see and use as a reference for their own collections.

The "collecting gene" seems to be something that you are born with as I know many people who have no interest in collecting anything whatsoever, and others who love it, no matter what they collect ! As I get older, like many collectors, the question I often ponder is what do I do with my collections when it's time to part with them, for whatever reason? The fun and satisfaction I have received from collecting them over the years has been all mine and can't be "transferred" to anyone else, not even family members who seem to lack the gene ! Time will tell.