

Hannah's Sweets and Monty Gum football cards

by Nigel Mercer ([Nigel's Webspace](#))

Monty Gum of Holland produced a range of football card giveaways in the period between the early 1950s and the company's demise in the 1990s. For a brief period during their life their gum and cards were distributed in the UK by a company called Hannahs of Johnstone.

I recently wrote to Hannahs and Carole Munro, the daughter of Tom Hannah, the man who imported the football cards, very kindly replied. The story below provides my research into the association between Hannahs and Monty Gum, compiled with the assistance of Carole. It is an emerging story, which I plan to update as new information comes to light. Any errors of fact are mine. If you can contribute more to this story please contact me via email: cards@littleoak.com.au

J. W. Filshill Ltd. was established in 1875, with its main business manufacturing confectionery. The company still exists today, based in Glasgow, though it has changed into a 'delivered goods' business (http://www.filshill.co.uk/page.asp?content_id=35).



According to Carole Munro, 'My grandfather had started off working as a factory boy in that company, worked up to foreman, manager, then on to sales and finance, then when the owner, Mr J.W. Filshill died with no children or family, he left Filshill's to my grandfather as long as grandfather provided for Mr Filshill's widow. That was in the 1890's'. The managing director of J. W. Filshill is currently Ronnie Hannah, suggesting that the connection between Filshill's and the Hannah family is a very long-standing one.

Update 15/11/2014: Alan Jenkins has advised that Filshill's produced a set of 25 football cards in 1924 – see <http://cartophilic-info-exch.blogspot.co.uk/2014/11/john-filshill-ltd-fil-220fis-2.html>.

Carole Munro's father, Tom Hannah, is the man responsible for the association with Monty Gum. He was born in 1917 in Paisley, and left school aged 14 to join Filshill's. He worked there for eight years before joining the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC) in 1939. After the war he rejoined the family business, moving to Johnstone in 1950, which is where he stayed until his death aged 81 in 1998.

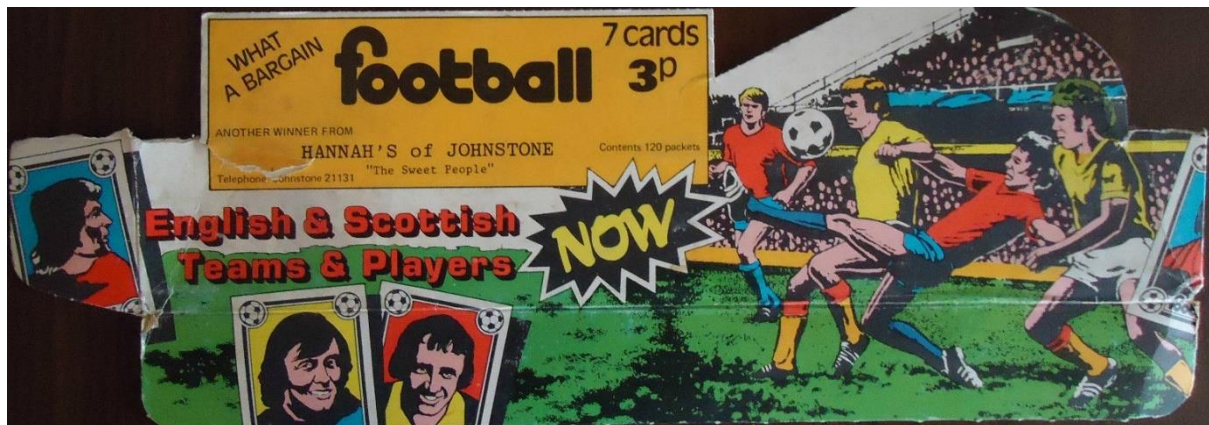
In 1963 Tom Hannah, aged 46, left Filshills to form his own company, Tom Hannah (Agencies) Ltd., importing and distributing confectionery. Remember that both Filshills and Hannahs still operate today, both with strong associations with the Hannah family. According to his obituary published in the Herald in 1998 he started 'with a staff of three and growing steadily over the years by installing a manufacturing plant and expanding the business to the current level of 85 employees. His hard work and sound business acumen laid the foundation for the solid structure of the company which is being continued by the next two generations' (<http://www.heraldscotland.com/sport/spl/aberdeen/tom-hannah-1.323858>).

I'm sure that in its 50+ year history Hannah's has had its ups and downs. Carole advised that the current company is 'not top end of the market selling expensive sweets and chocolates, we like to find or produce novelties, something new, different and inexpensive. Nowadays we manufacture chocolates for all ages: White Mice, Jazzies, and all sorts of shapes and flavours, that's 50% of the business and the other 50% is importing from all over the world and distributing in the UK. We export to Australia and New Zealand too'.



Which brings us back to the story of Tom Hannah and Monty Gum. Tom was a football fan, a supporter of St. Mirren, and perhaps it was this and his pursuit of new business opportunities which saw him tie up with Monty Gum. As recorded in my recent newsletter (<http://cards.littleoak.com.au/Newsletter/Nigel's%20Football%20Card%20News,%20Issue%2033.pdf>), Monty Gum was a company based in Holland, which produced some interesting football cards for the English market in the 1960s and 70s. They produced football cards in Holland from the early 1950s onwards, but became more ambitious in the 1960s with sets of international players, and some European team cards, some of which may have been sold in the UK.

However, in 1975/76 Monty Gum produced a set of 193 cards under the name 'Football Now' featuring only a small number of English and Scottish teams, which was clearly distributed by Hannah's of Johnstone, 'The Sweet People'. Carole Munro still works at Hannah's today. She



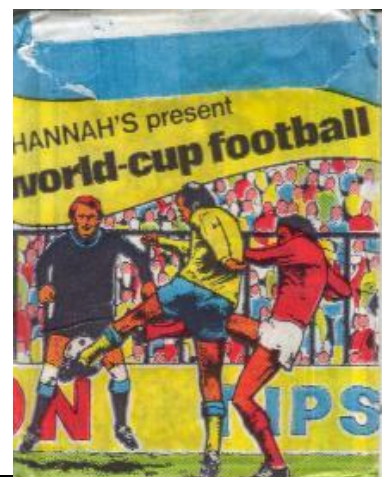
remembers Monty Gum football cards, and that it was her father who started the relationship with Monty Gum, from whom they bought the football cards to sell in the UK.

Carole remembers that the company was called Monty Fabrieken from Leiden in Holland. The owner was Mr Cees Mentink and he was quite a character. Tom Hannah met him at the yearly International Confectionery Trade Fair in Cologne, Germany, and they became friends as well as business colleagues. She also has a feeling that part of their connection was music, both enjoying jazz.

Carole notes that Hannah's still have some employees who worked there in the 70s and 80s. One of them remembers Monty Gum and how the company got letters and phone calls from people who were missing one or two cards to make up a set and my father and his secretary would go through their stock to try and find the particular cards they wanted, and post them out. Apparently Tom Hannah's secretary had to spend quite a bit of time on this!

To the best of my knowledge, the association between Hannahs and Monty Gum lasted perhaps five years, and during that time covered two, perhaps three, sets of football cards, plus some other non-sports sets (e.g. Space 1999 and Kojak in 1975, Pop Posters in 1978, ET in 1982). The 1975/76 set of Football Now is quite collectible, despite issues of quality both of the cards and the details on the cards. Interestingly, I don't think that you actually got any gum in the packets, just football cards, 7 for 3p. And the packets or wrappers were not of the usual type, more like thin paper bags.

To their credit, Hannah's persisted and presented World Cup Football in 1978, a set of 224 cards to coincide with the event in Argentina. These are now quite rare, suggesting that perhaps they were not widely distributed. The wrapper for these, 'Made and printed in Holland' suggests that there was an album for these cards, stating 'Join the Monty Club and order an album by sending



10 empty packets plus 50p in stamps to Monty Club, POB 173, Leiden, Holland'.

The sad news is that Hannah's moved into new premises 10 years ago which entailed quite a clear out and Carole is sure that they would have had some old Monty Cards around at that time, but alas, no longer.

The connection with football cards continued for Hannah's. Carole records that her son *'remembers hearing about Cees Mentink and Monty Gum, but he never visited them in Holland. By that time we were more involved with Fleer in the USA who were competitors with Topps and Merlin. He also remembers trying to set up a deal with the SFA*

(Scottish Football Association) but the SFA themselves, the clubs and the players wanted too much in the way of royalties to make it pay'.

I'm hoping that more information will turn up about the connection between Hannah's and Monty Gum. As it does, I will update this story. I am, again, indebted to Carole Munro (nee Hannah) for providing me with a link into Hannahs, and for being friendly and supportive of our quest to compile the social history of football cards of the 60s and 70s.

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