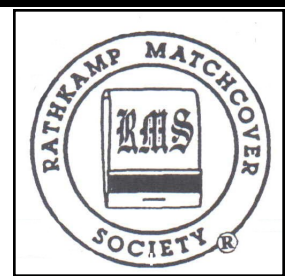


Rathkamp Matchcover Society:
*The Oldest Phillumenic Organization
 In The World!*



I've been in the hobby for 20 years, and I can't recall ever having seen or heard RMS referred to as the oldest phillumenic organization in the world. 'Oldest phillumenic organization in the U.S.'...yes. 'Oldest phillumenic organization in North America'...yes. But, 'oldest phillumenic organization in the world? No, but I believe it is!

That's not to say that RMS was the first, not by a long shot. There were earlier clubs right here in the U.S., such as the United Matchonians in the 1930s, and there were even earlier clubs elsewhere in the world, such as the Japanese club in 1903 [*RMS Bulletin, Jul/Aug 2002*]. But of clubs in existence...

You're already familiar with the fact that RMS predates all existing phillumenic clubs in the U.S. and Canada, but take a look at the existing clubs in the rest of the world. Several are quite new...1990s, and none that I am aware of, and I've researched it the best I can, pre-date 1945...except RMS (1941).

- Ass. Vitophilique Et Phillumenque Francaise (AVPF) - Germany (1954-present)
- Assoc. Port. Filumeniso - Portugal (?- present)
- Australian Match Cover Collectors' Society (AMCCS) - Australia (1957-present)
- British Matchbox Label & Booklet Society - (BMLBS) - England (1945-present)
- Chinese Phillumenic Society - Hong Kong (1948-present)
- Gruparea Filumenistilor din Romania - Romania - (1999?- present)
- Hobbies Matchbook Society - Malta (?- present)
- India Tip Top Match Cover Club (1994-present)
- The Match Collector Club of Thailand - Thailand (?- present)
- Phillumenistische Geselleschaft e. V. - Germany (1959 - present)
- Protea Match Collectors Club of South Africa - South Africa (- present)
- Queensland Matchcover Collectors Club (1976-present)
- S.G.D. Gray Lucifersetit Effen - Netherlands (1955-present)
- Rad Club of Phillumeny Leningrad - Russia (late 1990s?- present)
- Slovensky Filumenisti - Slovak Republic (?- present)
- Slovensky Filumenisticy Zvaz - Slovak Republic (?- present)

The Chinese Phillumenic Society, found in 1948, is the largest in the world, I would assume, simply because of the vast domestic population it has available to draw on. Some years ago, I interviewed one of the officers of that club for an RMS article [*Sep/Oct 1993*], and I remember that he pointed out that at its peak, The Chinese Phillumenic Society boasted a membership of over 20,000 by the early 1960s! [*then it dwindled rapidly with the onset of Mao's Cultural Revolution*].

But, RMS is older. That's quite a feather in RMS's hat. It should be touted more, and although RMS has historically focused its interests on domestic issues, we should make a greater effort to extend ourselves globally...which, as chance would have it, will be the subject of our next issue's editorial.