

# HOBBY HISTORY

## Foreign Made: II

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Some smart entrepreneur found a way round both problems by creating what was almost in match marketing parlance a new country called "Foreign Made". In a simple stroke, quantities of labels could be printed regardless of the country of origin of the matches, without having tiresome reprints to bother about, unless the average contents changed, but this had settled at 50 by that period, and was not to become a major problem until inflation set in past WW2. In addition, anyone who had political sensitivities about marketing a product made in communist Russia could now seek anonymity under a bland imprint which covered a variety of potential sources, and guaranteed that the purchaser would have no idea from whence the matches came. Having said that, those in the know could identify brands marketed by Arcos by the tiny "A" generally placed in the bottom right hand corner of the label design, so small sometimes that a magnifying glass was needed to spot it.

So a significant number of importers labels became "Foreign Made" from approximately 1930 onwards, as did a small number of labels which began to appear advertising businesses or brands. The first Tesco labels appeared about 1930, as did Timothy Whites and Loampit Starch. However, these were at that time in a minority.

Post WW2, the whole Foreign Made scene changed again, and this became the golden era of "Foreign Made". What changed substantially was the number of business, essentially retailers and wholesalers, who marketed their own labels, plus a whole lot of new importers who marketed their labels aggressively against what was now a much reduced and expensive domestic manufacturing scene. In addition, post war inflation really caused matches to become much more of a basic commodity than

they were before, and price became determining factor. Sources of supply were essentially the former Eastern Europe, with most coming from Russia, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland, although there were some, not particularly successful, imports from India.

Some sets appeared, notably the famous Clock series, which was marketed in the UK by Woolworths, and the Folklore Scenes, which used to come from Italy. There are a whole series of sets of world leaders and country scenes, which were probably never issued, and look like as if they were prepared for in Yugoslavia for Holland.

Foreign Made only appeared overseas on a small number of issues in Holland and Belgium, and a few labels for the Far East (? for Singapore).

Foreign Made are a gold mine for collectors who like minor changes in detail, colour, misprints, average contents, etc. I, personally, have 34 different varieties of "Tulip", and 33 of "Norvic", both, incidentally, from the same importer. Other labels where a huge number of varieties exist are Criterion, Scissors, C. Baker and Co, Collis, Alban, Finlays, Fire Queen, Maid Marian and many others. Because of the need to control costs, minor changes on labels are often very crude, particularly with regard to the average contents, and spelling mistakes are quite frequent.

*Typical Post-1945 Foreign Made*

