

HOBBY HISTORY

International News From Down Under

-“The *Sydney Morning Herald* of January 1st 1919 tells a story from their Paris correspondent that a new variety of match has made an appearance in France, the “Fireproof” match. When the person striking the match succeeds in getting a light, the light goes out at once, as the wooden matchstick refuses to burn. The annoyance of the public led to the discovery that the sticks had been cut out of wood used for the construction of military huts, and had been subjected to a fireproofing process. The result was a match famine in France.” [AMCCS Observer, June 2007]

-“So acute was the shortage of wood for match sticks just after World War I, that the *Albury Mail* of 30th December 1920 reported that the leaves (withered grass of the heads) and the new grass of the Black Boy tree were being seriously considered for use in the matchmaking process by Bryant & May.” [AMCCS Observer, September 2006]

-AMCCS reported in 2000 that its membership had declined 30% over the last 20 years, while dues had increased 180%. [AMCCS Observer, September 2000] [Ed. That spurred me to look at RMS - for the last 20 years, our membership has declined at least 50%, while dues have increased 100%]

-“Mr. A Woodward, who unsuccessfully contested the Geelong seat in the recent Victorian Legislative Assembly elections, has filed a petition with the Court of Disputed Returns. He seeks a declaration by the court that Sir Thomas Maltby was not validly elected, as he claimed that the alleged distribution of book matches to electors amounted to the “illegal practice of bribery and treating.” [AMCCS Observer, June

1958]

-“Bryant & May, the company that made matches a household name, made its last match late yesterday. It was a low-key affair for one of Melbourne’s best known institutions. The company had made it clear that it did not want the media recording the final hours of its life. Instead, the remaining 60 employees of the Richmond factory lamented over a quiet barbecue. The end of the Bryant & May matches operation came after its long-time rival, Swedish match, bought out the British company last year.” [Melbourne Sun, October 29th, 1988]