

HOBBY HISTORY

Historical Tidbits: II

- > On February 28th, 1962, there were 715 active members in RMS.
- > By March 1962, 2,066 different RMS Convention covers had already been issued since 1939.
- > “As part of the total war effort from 1940 to mid 1949 the distribution of matches in Great Britain was subject to Match (Control) Order 1940. In that period matches could only be distributed under license. this department also controlled the price of matches and the number per box.” *March 1981 Long Beach bulletin*
- > In 1948, 196 billion book matches were given away in the U.S.
- > “Artificial fire was made in 1823 by the introduction of the Dobereiner lamp, named after the inventor Professor Dobereiner of Jena. This invention depended on the action of zinc on acidulated water which created hydrogen. This gas so liberated was passed through a tiny orifice, hitting a mass of spongy platinum and coming with oxygen in the air. Quickly the platinum began to glow and create heat sufficient to set the hydrogen on fire. Although this lamp was created by those looking for a cheap, reliable match-like product, today its implications for a hydrogen powered car can be seen.” *March 1981 Long Beach bulletin*
- > Anson Beecher, born in Watertown, Conn, Oct. 19, 1805, started a match business in 1850 at Plymouth, Conn. Later, he moved to Westville and took his sons into partnership as A. Beecher & Sons. One son, Ebenezer B., designed match machines. On Feb. 3, 1863, Beech and E.B. were issued patent no. 37,562 for “Improved Machine for Graming Lucifer Match-Splints for Dipping.” This machine allowed mass dipping of wood splints. Hand dipping was still needed, but now could be done several hundred at a time.
- > Another machine prepared splints, yet another sliced the dipped splints into two to make normal length matches. These machines were all unconnected and required many hand operations, but they were the simplest method of making matches. Swift & Courtney in Wilmington, DE, who had what was perhaps the best produced match in the world at the time, need this equipment, so, in 1870, they merged with A. Beecher & Sons. The new company was capitalized at \$265,000. Later, this firm was merged into the Diamond Match Company. Anson Beecher died on January 12, 1884. *April 1981 Long Beach bulletin*
- > In 1976, the U.S. manufactured 300 billion strike anywhere matches and 100 billion safety matches.
- > In 1881, the U.S. revenue from taxation amounted to \$3,272,359, while custom duties on imported matches come to \$6,186. The total consumption of matches in the U.S. that year was app. 40 million matches.
- > Before World War II, the Japanese flooded the world markets with their matches made to be the exact replicas of local products. Only close examination could tell the real match from its Japanese imitation. *April 1980 Long Beach bulletin*
- > By 1680, people understood that by spreading phosphorous on sheets of coarse paper and then drawing a splint tipped in sulphur across it would make fire. However, the economics of the times were such that no one but the rich could benefit. Therefore, no one carried forth the idea. The inhibiting fact was that the price of phosphorous was akin to \$250 an ounce. When the phosphorous novelty cease to amuse the rich, the idea languished for nearly the next 150 years. *April 1980 Long Beach bulletin*

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