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A SIMPLIFIED CLASSIFICATION FOR TIN WAX VESTA MATCHBOXES

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This paper outlines a simplified classification system for tin wax vesta matchboxes. Although based on material from Central Otago it should be possible to easily integrate matchboxes from any site in New Zealand.

Since Anson (1983) produced his pioneering matchbox typology and dating system for New Zealand wax vesta boxes, many new types have been recovered from further excavations in Central Otago. Recently excavated sites include the Arrowtown Chinese settlement (Ritchie, 1984), and two sites in the Kawarau Gorge - a Chinese hut site ('The Rapids', S133/453) and a dump associated with a nineteenth century European house site known as 'The Ledge' (S133/868). Matchboxes from another Chinese site, 'The Poplars' (S115/44) in the upper Clutha Valley were also analysed. In addition, 72 boxes in surface collections from the following sites were examined: Cornish Point (S133/64), Bullendale (S123/144), the Young Australian mine huts (S133/719), Molyneux Avenue (S133/881 - a late nineteenth century urban dump site in Cromwell) and S124/397, a Chinese hut site in the Motutapu Valley.

The Sites	S.R. number	Numbers of boxes
Chinese Store	S123/250	12
Arrowtown	S123/249	210
The Ledge	S133/868	416
The Rapids	S133/453	66
Bullendale	S123/144	35*
The Poplars	S115/44	151**
Young Australian	S133/719	8*
Cornish Point	S133/64	20*
Molyneux Ave	S133/881	16
Motutapu	S124/393	9*
Total		943

TABLE 1. Sources of tin wax vesta matchboxes used in this study. (* surface collected. ** Anson (1983) did not study the full complement of matchboxes from this site).

Previous work on matchboxes by Prickett (1981), Spring-Rice (1982) and, in particular, Anson (1983) made the identification and dating of the matchboxes in this study relatively straight forward.

However, when an attempt was made to fit several new types into Anson's typology, it was found that their integration would result in the endless addition of new types to the typology and meant that matchboxes of the same brand would be widely separated.

Consequently, a simpler classification has been devised using brands as the criteria for distinguishing categories. Cross references are provided to the Anson typology. The main advantage of this new system is that new categories and types can be added easily or fitted within the framework. The system also simplifies identification.

All matchboxes are described using Anson's terminology. For a more detailed description of wax vestas, and the production and construction of wax vesta tin matchboxes refer to Anson's paper (Anson, 1983:115-130).

A variation of the brand categories was required when dealing with R. Bell & Co (London and New Zealand) and Bryant and May boxes. These brands were divided into painted and stamped labels, a distinct and easily recognisable difference.

Within each category the types are listed in chronological order where determinable. Anson concluded that matchboxes that had flat, smooth bases, abrasive paste at one end and vesta holding devices were 'early', while recessed, roughened bases and snap-catches were later features. Using these features as a guide the boxes were placed in chronological order. Unfortunately, the sites from which most of the new boxes were recovered had broad occupation spans, e.g. The Arrowtown Chinese settlement and the Ledge site were both occupied from ca. 1870 until after 1900; consequently, they were of little use for precise dating of the new types.

At the Ledge site the rubbish had been thrown over a 15 m cliff. Although there was no clear stratigraphy in the midden, this European deposit contained a wide range of matchbox brands which was interpreted as being indicative of its long occupation (this was confirmed by later bottle and matchbox dating). This situation contrasts with that in rural Chinese sites which generally contain a limited range of brands which is partly attributable to their relatively short term occupations.

The boxes from the Young Australian mine could be dated more precisely because the mine is known to have operated from 1872 until 1885 (Parcel, 1976:98-99). The dates attributed to boxes from this site correlate well with dates given by Anson to similar boxes from other sites. Documented, short

term occupation sites such as the Young Australian mine site are particularly useful for obtaining more precise use-period dates for the various matchbox types.

The matchbox classification is outlined now. The description of each box highlights key identification features. The dates for each box type are based on Anson's (1983) work, except for the recently excavated, previously unknown types which were dated by association with previously dated types. They are organised by brand category (1-19).

1. Bell and Black

Type 1a. Embossed 'Bell and Black 15 Bowlane, Cheapside, London' (Fig. 1). Flat smooth base; one piece base and sides. The lid is flat with full address stamped label. Length 7.2 cm, width 4 cm, height 2.4 cm. Excavated at Arrowtown, also found at Omata Stockade and Warea Redoubt (Prickett, 1981:486). Date: 1870s.

Type 1b. Embossed 'Bell and Blacks, Bowlane, Cheapside, London, Wax Vestas' (Fig. 1). Flat smooth base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction folded over rear left. Flat stamped lid with bell motif lid and a vesta holding impress. 7.2 x 3.5 x 2.4 cm. Date: 1870 (Anson). Anson's Type 1.

Type 1c. Embossed the same as Type 1b (Fig. 1). Box construction same as above except sides-junction on rear right. Abrasive on right side. Date: 1875 (Anson). Anson's Type 2.

Type 1d. Embossed the same as Type 1b (Fig. 1). Box construction same as above but there is no vesta holding impress.

Type 1e. Embossed 'Bell and Black, 15 Bow Lane, London Trade Mark' (Fig. 1). Flat, smooth base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, folded over rear right. Abrasive one side. Flat stamped lid with bell motif. 7.2 x 4.2 x 2.8 cm.

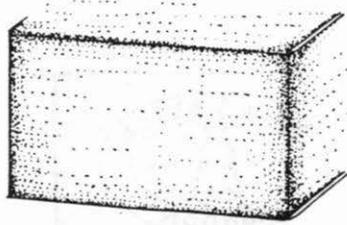
Type 1f. Embossed 'Bell and Black, Trade Mark, London' (Fig. 2). Flat, smooth base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, slotted, rear right. Abrasive on right side. Flat, stamped lid with bell motif. 7.1 x 3.5 x 2.2 cm.

Type 1g. Embossed 'Bell and Black Trade Mark, London No 4' (Fig. 2). Same as above, apart from 'No 4' embossed on lid. Date: 1880 (Anson). Anson's Type 3.

Type 1h. Embossed the same as Type 1f but is elongated (Fig. 2). Sides-junction is folded over rear left. 7.1 x 3.7 x 2.2 cm.



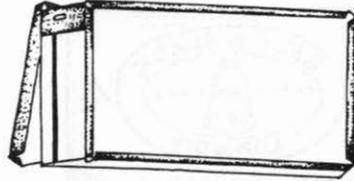
1A



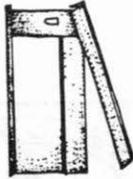
1A



1B,C



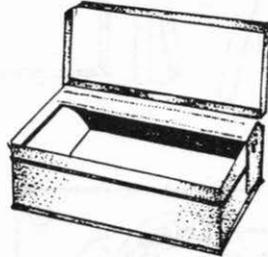
1B



1C



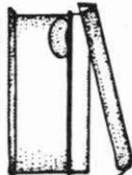
1D



1D



1E



1E



1E

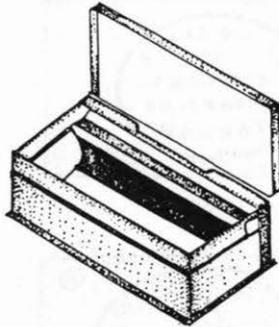
FIG. 1.



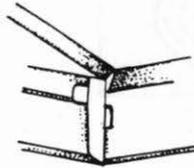
1F



1G



1F,G



1F,G



1H



1H



2A



2A

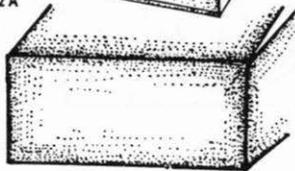


FIG. 2.

Type 1i. Embossed the same as Type 1f. Flat smooth base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, folded over rear left. Abrasive on right side. Flat stamped lid with bell motif. 7.2 x 3.8 x 2.1 cm.

2. Palmer Vestas

Type 2a. Embossed 'Palmer's Vestas No 3, Bow, London' (Fig. 3). Flat smooth base. One piece base and sides. Abrasive on right side. Lid has stamped label and vesta holding impress. 7.2 x 4.1 x 2.3 cm. Anson's Type 4.

Type 2b. Embossed 'Palmer's Vestas Patent, Bow, London' (Fig. 3). Flat smooth base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, slotted rear right. Flat, stamped lid. 7.2 x 3.8 x 2.2 cm.

Type 2c. Embossed the same as Type 2b, apart from 'patent' (Fig. 3). Flat smooth base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, folded over rear right. Flat stamped lid. 7.2 x 3.6 x 2.3 cm.

3. Palmer and Son

Type 3a. Embossed 'Palmer and Son, Old Ford R. London' (Fig. 3). One piece base and sides. Sides-junction soldered. Abrasive right side. Exterior vesta holder. Flat stamped label. 7.3 x 4.1 x 2.3 cm. Anson's Type 5.

Type 3b. Embossed the same as Type 3a. Box construction the same as above except it has a vesta holding impress.

4. R. Letchford and Co

Type 4a. Embossed 'R. Letchford and Co, Three Colts Lane, Bethnall Green, Trade Mark, London' (Fig. 4). Same box construction as Type 3a. Anson's Type 6.

5. Pace and Sons

Type 5a. Embossed 'Pace and Sons, London' (Fig. 4). Flat smooth base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, slotted rear right. Flat stamped label. 7.1 x 3.5 x 2.1 cm. Date: post-1871 (Anson). Anson's Type 7.

6. Royal Patent

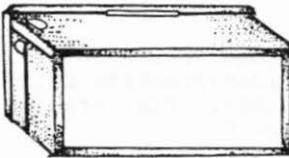
Type 6a. Label reads 'Royal Patent Wax Vestas, Warranted, No 4' (Fig. 4). Flat, roughened base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction slotted rear right. Flat lid with painted label. 6.9 x 3.7 x 2.3 cm. Anson's Type 8.



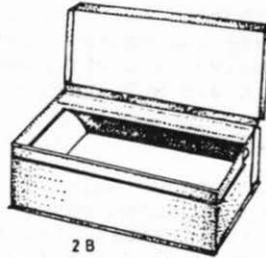
2B



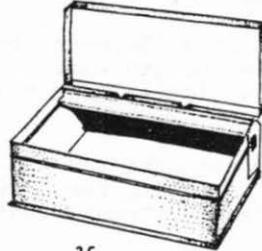
2C



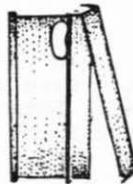
2B



2B



2C



2B



3A



3B



3A, B
4A

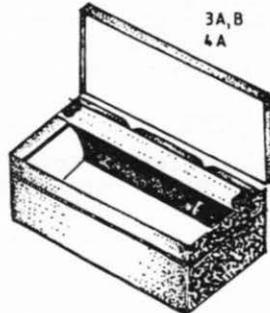


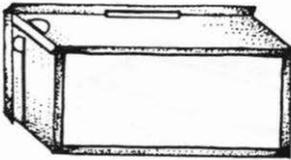
FIG 3



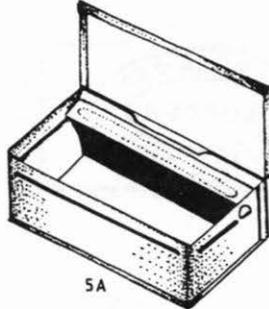
4A



5A



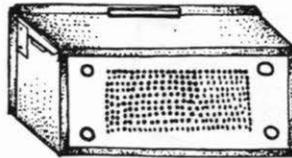
5A



5A



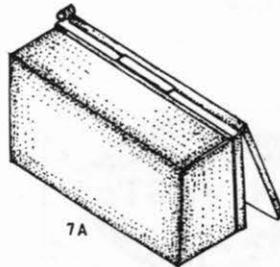
6A



6A



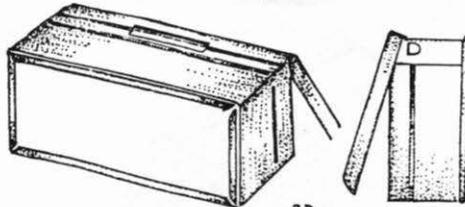
7A



7A



7B



7B

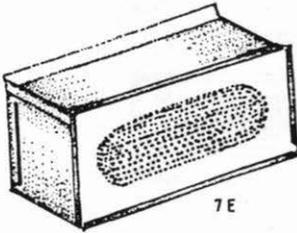
FIG. 4.



7C, E



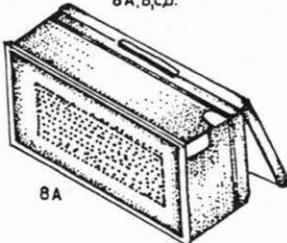
7D



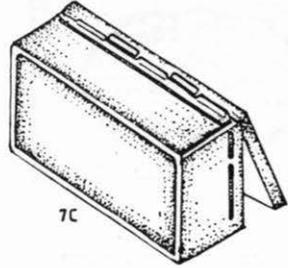
7E



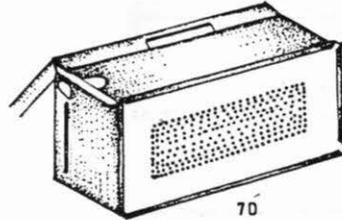
8A, B, C, D.



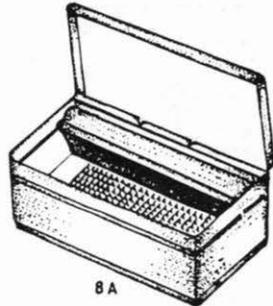
8A



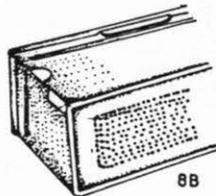
7C



7D
19A



8A



8B

FIG. 5.

7. R. Bell & Co, London (stamped labels)

Type 7a. Embossed 'R. Bell & Co, Cannon St, London' (Fig. 4). Flat smooth base; one piece base and sides. Abrasive right side. Flat lid with stamped label and an exterior vesta holder. 7.2 x 4.0 x 2.3 cm.

Type 7b. Embossed 'R. Bell & Co's Patent Wax Vestas, Warranted, London' (Fig. 4). Flat, smooth base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction folded over rear right. Abrasive on right side. Flat stamped lid with pictorial motif. 7.3 x 4.0 x 2.2 cm.

Type 7c. Embossed 'R. Bell & Co, London. Estab. 1832' (Fig. 5). Flat, smooth base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction crimped rear left. Abrasive on right side. Flat stamped lid. 6.9 x 3.5 x 2.2 cm. Anson's Type 13.

Type 7d. Embossed same as Type 7c. Flat, roughened base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, slotted rear right. The lid is slightly recessed and stamped. 7.2 x 3.5 x 2.7 cm.

Type 7e. Embossed same as Type 7c. Recessed, roughened base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, folded rear right. Recessed, stamped lid. 7.2 x 3.5 x 2.2 cm.

8. R. Bell & Co, London (painted labels)

Type 8a. Label reads 'R. Bell & Co London, Wax Vestas, Est'd 1832' (Fig. 5). Recessed roughened base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction tennoned rear left. Rear hinge one pivot. 6.9 x 3.5 x 2.2 cm. Anson's Type 9.

Type 8b. Same label as Type 8a (Fig. 5). Box construction same as above except the sides junction is tennoned rear right. Anson's Type 10.

Type 8c. Same label as Type 8a (Figs 5 and 6). Box construction also the same apart from smooth base and abrasive surface on right side. Anson's Type 11.

Type 8d. Same label as Type 8a (Figs 5 and 6). Box construction also the same apart from the sides junction which is crimped on the rear left and the lid hinge is multipivot. Anson's Type 12.

Type 8e. Same label as Type 8a (Figs 5 and 6). Recessed, roughened base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction tennoned rear right. Deduced to belong to R. Bell & Co, London, because of the similarity in box construction. 7.1 x 3.6 x 2.7 cm.

9. R. Bell & Co, New Zealand (stamped labels)

Type 9a. Embossed 'R. Bell & Co New Zealand, Est'd 1832 No 4' (Fig. 6). Recessed roughened base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction crimped, rear left. Multipivot hinge. 7.1 x 3.5 x 2.3 cm. Date of introduction: 1895. Anson's Type 14.

Type 9b. Embossed the same as Type 9a (Fig. 6). Recessed smooth base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, crimped rear left. Abrasive on right side. Interior platform at front of box. 6.9 x 3.5 x 2.3 cm. Anson's Type 15.

Type 9c. Embossed the same as Type 9a (Fig. 6). Box construction the same as above except the interior position is at the rear of the box.

Type 9d. Embossed the same as Type 9a (Fig. 6). Flat smooth base. Sides and base made from one piece of metal. Abrasive on right side. 7.0 x 3.7 x 2.2 cm.

Type 9e. Embossed the same as Type 9a (Figs 6 and 7). Recessed base, filled with abrasive paste. Sides-junction joined by curved overlapping tongues. 7.2 x 4.2 x 2.0 cm. Anson's Type 16. Date: 1911? (Anson).

Type 9f. Embossed the same as Type 9a. Same as above but smaller version. 6.9 x 3.6 x 1.9 cm. 1930s.

10. R. Bell & Co, New Zealand (painted label)

Type 10a. Label reads 'R. Bell & Co, Ltd, New Zealand Wax Vestas, Estab. 1832' (Fig. 7). Recessed base filled with abrasive paste. Round cornered. Multipivot hinge. 6.8 x 3.5 x 1.95 cm. Anson's Type 17. Date: ca. 1911? (Anson).

11. Bryant and May, London

Type 11a. Embossed 'Bryant and May London' (Fig. 7). Flat smooth base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, folded over rear right. Abrasive right side. Lid stamped with vesta holding impress. 7.2 x 3.4 x 2.4 cm. Date: ca. 1875 (Luker, 1982:29).

Type 11b. Embossed 'Bryant and May London, Wax Vestas' (Fig. 8). Recessed roughened base. One piece base and sides. Side hinge. Recessed stamped lid. 7.0 x 3.5 x 2.3 cm. Date: 1880. Anson's Type 19.

Type 11c. Embossed the same as Type 11b (Fig. 8). Box construction same as above except rear hinge is one pivot. Date: ca. 1875 (Luker, 1982:30).

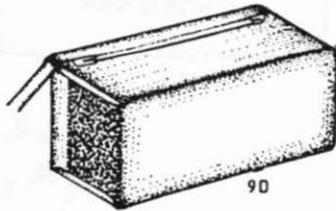
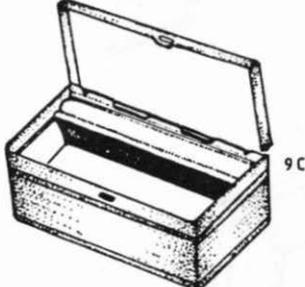
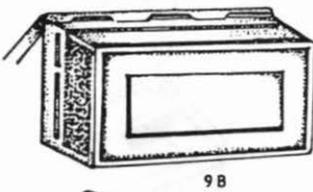
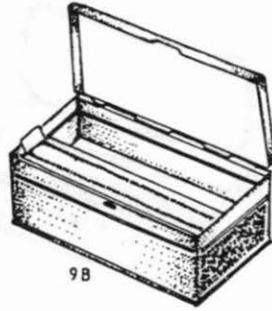
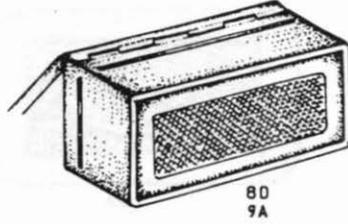
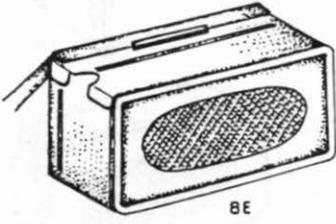
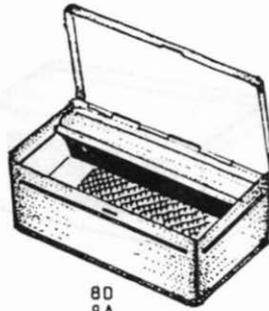
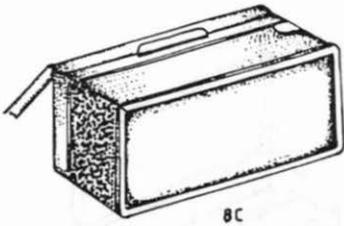


FIG. 6.

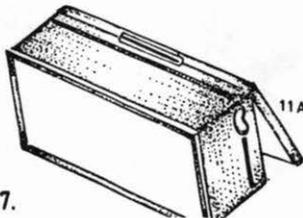
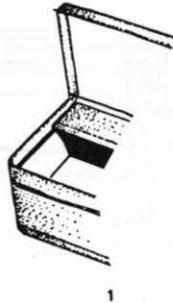
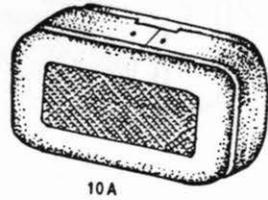
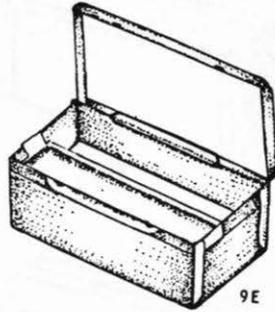
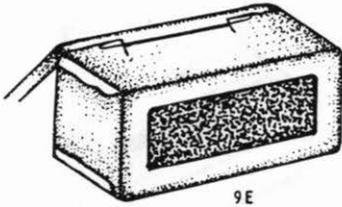


FIG. 7.

Type 11d. Embossed the same as Type 11b (Fig. 8). Recessed smooth base; two piece base and sides. Sides-junction slotted rear right. Recessed stamped lid. 7.2 x 3.5 x 2.0 cm. Anson's Type 20.

Type 11e. Embossed the same as Type 11b (Fig. 8). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction tennoned rear right. Flat stamped label. 6.8 x 3.6 x 2.0 cm. Anson's Type 21. Date: ca. 1875 (Luker, 1982:30).

Type 11f. Embossed the same as Type 11b (Figs 8 and 9). Flat roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction tennoned rear left. 7.0 x 3.7 x 2.4 cm. Date: ca. 1875 (Luker, 1982:30).

Type 11g. Embossed the same as Type 11b (Figs 8 and 9). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction slotted rear right. Rear hinge-one pivot. Recessed, stamped lid. 7.0 x 3.5 x 2.1 cm. Date: ca. 1875 (Luker, 1982:30).

Type 11h. Embossed the same as Type 11b (Fig. 9). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Rounded corners. Sides-junction crimped in the centre of the right hand end. Recessed stamped lid. 7.2 x 3.6 x 2.2 cm.

12. Bryant and May, London (painted labels)

Type 12a. Label reads 'Bryant and May London, Letters Patent' (Fig. 9). Recessed roughened base. Round sided box. 7.0 x 4.0 x 1.8 cm. Anson's Type 18. Date: ca. 1875 (Luker, 1982:30).

Type 12b. Same as above but shorter (6.2 cm long).

Type 12c. Painted lid with oriental scene (Fig. 9). Flat base with areas for replaceable paper striking surface. Sides-junction rear-left. The basal area is wider and larger (7.7 x 5.0 cm) than the area of the lid (4.3 x 7.2 cm). Height 3.0 cm. Anson's Type 22. Date: post-1872 until at least 1894 (Luker, 1982:8,30).

13. Marriotte & Co, Brussels

Type 13a. Embossed 'Marriotte & Co, Wax Vestas, Brussels' (Fig. 10). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction, slotted rear right. Flat stamped lid. 7.0 x 3.6 x 2.2 cm. Anson's Type 23.

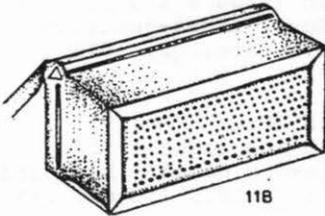
Type 13b. Embossed 'Marriotte & Co Star Vestas, Trade Mark' (Fig. 10). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction slotted rear right. Flat stamped lid. 7.0 x 3.8 x 2.4 cm.



11B C, D, F, G.



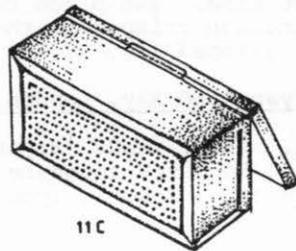
11B



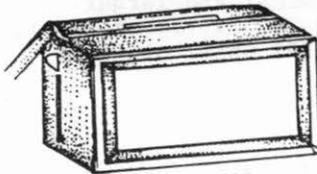
11B



11C



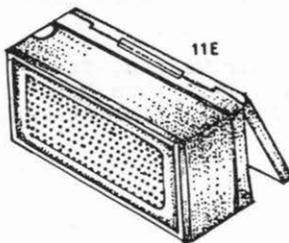
11C



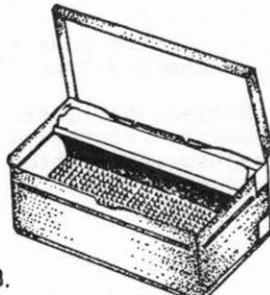
11D



11E

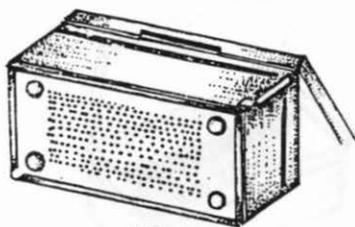


11E

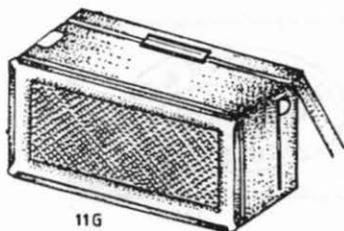


11E

FIG. 8.



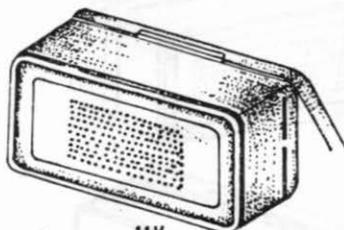
11F



11G



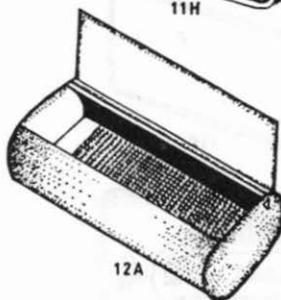
11H



11H



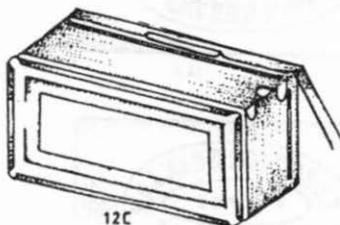
12A



12A



12C



12C

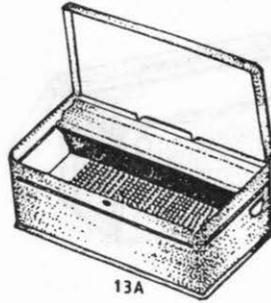


12C

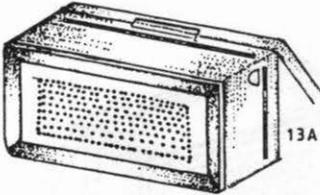
FIG. 9.



13A



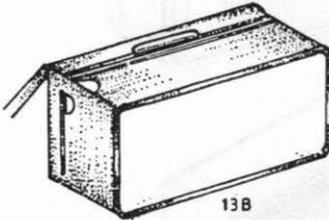
13A



13A



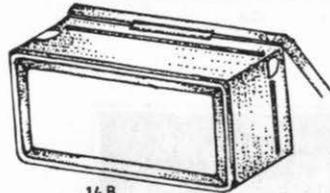
13B



13B



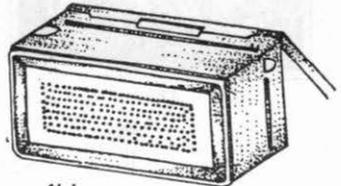
14A



14B



14C



14A
15A



15A

FIG. 10.

14. Superior Belgian

Type 14a. Embossed 'Superior Belgian Wax Vestas, Mars, No 4' (Fig. 10). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction slotted rear right. Flat stamped lid. 7.0 x 4.0 x 2.1 cm. Anson's Type 24. Date: 1887 (Anson).

Type 14b. Embossed the same as Type 14a (Fig. 10). Box construction same as above except base is recessed and smooth.

Type 14c. Embossed 'Superior Belgian Wax Vestas, Vulpes, No 4' (Fig. 10). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Side-junction slotted rear right. Flat stamped lid. 7.0 x 4.0 x 2.0 cm.

Type 14d. Embossed the same as Type 14c. Box construction same as above except base is recessed and smooth.

15. Lehman and Lehman

Type 15a. Embossed 'Lehman & Lehman, Bruxelles, Union, No 4' (Fig. 10). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction slotted rear right. Flat stamped lid. 7.0 x 3.5 x 2.0 cm.

16. New Zealand Wax Vesta Company

Type 16a. Embossed 'New Zealand Wax Vesta Company' (Fig. 11). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction tennoned rear left. Rear hinge single pivot. Flat stamped lid. 7.0 x 3.6 x 2.2 cm. Anson's Type 25.

Type 16b. Embossed the same as Type 16a (Fig. 11). Box construction same as above except sides-junction is tennoned rear right and the rear hinge is multi-pivoted. Anson's Type 26. Date: 1895 (Anson).

Type 16c. Embossed 'New Zealand Wax Vesta Co No 4' (Fig. 11). Recessed roughened base. Sides-junction tennoned rear right. Variation on multipivot. 6.9 x 3.7 x 2.3 cm.

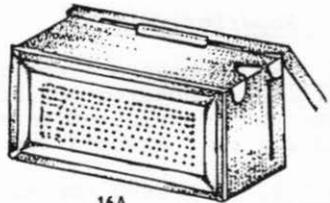
Type 16d. Embossed 'New Zealand Wax Vesta Co Ltd No 4' (Fig. 11). Recessed roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction crimped rear left. Rear hinge multipivot. 6.9 x 3.7 x 2.3 cm.

17. Smoke Harlequin Tobacco

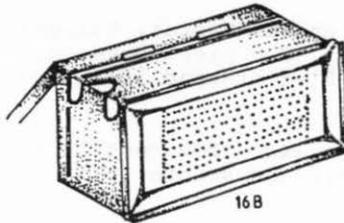
Type 17a. Lid only. Embossed 'Smoke Harlequin Tobacco No 4' (Fig. 11). 7.1 x 3.9 cm. Anson's type 27. Date 1904 (Anson).



16A



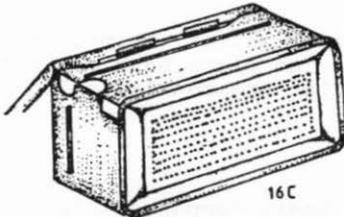
16A



16B



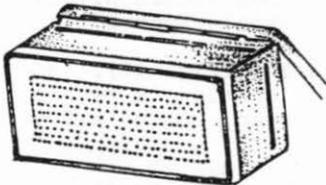
16C



16C



16D



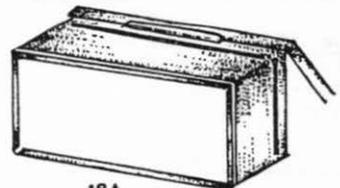
16D



17A



18A



18A

FIG.11.

18. London Wax Vestas

Type 18a. Embossed 'London Wax Vestas, P H & Co, Trade Mark, Warranted' (Fig. 11). Flat smooth base. Two piece base and sides. Flat stamped lid. 7.3 x 3.6 x 2.1 cm.

19. Patent Wax Vestas

Type 19a. Embossed 'Patent Wax Vestas Trade Mark' (Fig. 12). Flat roughened base. Two piece base and sides. Sides-junction slotted rear right. Recessed stamped lid. 7.0 x 3.5 x 2.0 cm. Date: 1880.



19A

Acknowledgements

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- | | | |
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