Chemistry sets

Stinks/Bangs (America)

mid-1950s advertising slogan that there was a chemistry set in every house on every street in suburban Amercia.

Strikingly coloured boxes, smart-looking, well-dressed young boys, exuding the confidence that the field of chemistry was feeling at the time.

Advertising space – usually comicbooks, Popular science magazine and other pubs aimed at children.

Scouts promoting the sciences – badges – optics, engineering

TV – educational programming -Watch Mr Wizard, easily recreatable tricks/expts

Late 1950s – being a scientist was not enough – space race, nuclear power.

1960s concerns over safety had – parents did not want their children to be playing with loose chemicals or attempting to bend glass tubing with an alcohol lamp in the basement. Govt regulation of chems fundamentally Changed the make up of the sets and therefore the possible experiments.

Author points to Silent Spring and thalidomide, air poln as a reason for negative associations with the word chemical.

1980s surge – public interest in science began to re-emerge – smaller sets, fewer chemicals, if any at all. Later, Harry Potter, kitchen chemistry and grossology. Computer and web based components began to take home experimentation in a new direction although not the same kind of free experimentation.

Magice/ Masculinity

Standard initiating function for career in science

Increasingly litigious society - the perceived decline of chem sets and chemistry in general is a measure of this

Generally go through the references of this paper – material culture, gender, advertising

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Experimentation/ Amateur chemistry

­­http://philosophyofscienceportal.blogspot.co.uk/2008/04/home-chemistlong-gone.html

Looks at magazines/ periodicals in US – most were mech/elec focused but with the occaisional chemical article. Raymond B Wailes wrote a column, later adapted to become a book in the 1930s.

2 chem specific publications named – one by a lab supply house (A Daigger & Co, Chicago) during the Gt Dep 1933-36 to drum up sales. Journal of chemical Education (Am Chem Soc – would this have appealed/ been available to general browsers/ amatuers, need membership? )

what were the equivalent in the UK?

Books – Raymond Francis Yates: How to Make and Use a Home Chmical :aboratory.

Frederick Cllins: Experimental Chemistry

Chemcraft Chemists Clubs – own little mag – ads, news, fiction

Amateur chem. Journals self produced – desire to communicate with others, home study and experimentation as a way to improve financial lot (?? Self improvement was generally a good thing, e.g studying for book keepings etc.)

American Amateur Chemists Society 1931 – Chemical Digest (What was the UK equivalenet, if any?)

Organic Chemists Correspondence Clubb (OCCC) – OCCC Monograph

Amaeican Amateur Scientists League (AASL) – The amateur Scuentists

Retort

Twentieth Century Alchemist of America

Crucible = subscribers were considered part of the Benzene Ring, an informal group of readers and contributers.

American Scientists of America = Amateur Scientists Magazine. => Science Quest (1950 ended)