That’s it! This...is War!

I have searched for years! I have meticulously combed through literally hundreds of thousands of covers. I have forgone meals [very hard for me!] to sit for hours on end pouring over the various mounds of material available on freebie tables. I have sifted through endless auction lots. I have roamed the streets to the wee hours of the night, looking for that right matchbook in gutters and garbage cans...all for naught. I have yet to find a Man Hole cover that will gain me entrance into the hobby’s most exclusive club...the mysterious and little known Man Hole Cover Club!

Yes, we’ve all heard the rumors of deep, underground bunkers and whispered connections to Goldman Sachs, the clandestine meetings in certain Eastern European capitals, the paper trail said to lead to some nebulous Military–Industrial complex, the affiliation with the ominous Trilateral Commission...even, dare I say...links to the heretofore unexplained saucer landings in various wheat fields over three continents.

But, nothing has ever been proven. Nothing has ever come to light, for the Man Hole Cover Club issues no newsletter, holds no public meetings, puts forth no roster. Indeed, its membership is a closely guarded secret, and all enquiries are met with a stoic, frightened silence. The MHCC exists...but for what nefarious purpose? To monopolize the covers of the world? A complete takeover of the hobby? The extinction of collecting as we know it? The oxidation of every striker in existence?

Who can say? Who knows? But history has taught us one indelible lesson (despite the likes of Neville Chamberlain and others). Fire must be fought with fire!

My friends, I am announcing today the formation of an organization created out of Man’s primeval instinct to survive, an agency designed and constructed with but one goal—to counteract and nullify the insidious activities of the Man Hole Cover Club! Today, the Tree Stump Matchcover Club is born! [thunder, lightning, opening bars of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony]

Membership in this first ever secret counter-insurgency group will be limited to those collectors who are able to produce a hitherto unknown tree stump matchcover. Fittingly, I, as the leader of this elite crime-fighting organization, have discovered the first such treasure, pictured here. The rationale for the membership requirement is that since our mission is so dangerous and demanding, only the most dedicated of collectors need apply...and only the most dedicated collectors will be able to locate and procure a fabled tree stump cover.

No meetings, no bulletins, no dues, no frills and fads...but only members will be privy to our secret handshake and password, by which members may identify each other. Other collectors, although not on the front lines of the struggle, may now rest easy, safe in the knowledge that the future of the hobby is once again insured for posterity.