

Rarities turn Collectors Green with Envy

On The Apprentice and Dragons Den all kinds of shaky business ideas are pitched and torn to shreds. Imagine pitching to Alan Sugar (or Donald Trump) your 'herbal' remedy which had worked on cabbage fungus so you believe it will cure almost every human ailment?

I doubt you would get very far - but that is exactly what William Radam claimed when he began selling his Microbe Killer. A concoction of mostly water with a glass of wine and a weak solution of sulphuric and hydrochloric acid, medicine agencies today would soon ban it. Using scientific jargon based on Pasteur's research into bacteria, only half understood by either him or the public, he hoodwinked them into buying so much of it that in some parts of America he was better known than the President! The other man with similar fame was H.H.Warner, well known of course for his range of 'Safe Cures'. In 1883 he introduced a new brand: his 'XXX Tippecanoe Bitters', later removing the word bitters in a market crowded with choice. It was mostly Rum when first launched but by the early 1900's, with legislators and scientists beginning to tackle these dangerous charlatans, he was declaring 23% ethyl alcohol (the formulation was actually 60% alum, 10% tannic and traces of orris root starch).

The secret of this success was a genius for publicity and a public with no access to affordable health care. Most people relied either on herbal based medicines, passed down the generations and folk law, or the cathartic, dulling effects of opiates that were present in many so-called 'cures'. These did nothing for your ills except take away the pain. Like Trump perhaps, both men understood how showmanship, catching the public eye with a good slogan, and distinctive packaging, could get you a long way. Both became millionaires. The majority of both men's bottles are various shades of amber but as usual there are always exceptions. Clear Tippecanoe bottles are rumoured and there are curiosity rarities (with misspelled 'Rochestr' or 'Rocheter') but only very few in true **green**. American Glass Gallery sold a green Tippecanoe in 2011 (Auction No. 6) for \$8500 - approx. £7,000. There are also green-ish glass examples but with Radam's bottles it is more clear cut. Brits look for the cruder, bubbly text as opposed to USA made bottles featuring more crisply struck lettering and skeleton image. Colour is much starker and clear cut. BBR is selling in February, with British style crudity/ embossing, what seems to be the worlds **only green glass example!** This was remarkably recently found, quite out of the blue, in Norfolk. Bottles from either brand in this colour bring out green envy in collectors so expect a real bun fight for it on Sunday 2nd February, and if you can't make the BBR WinterNational w/e you can listen in live on: easyliveauction.com.

Right: A relatively standard red amber London Warners alongside the recently found, previously unrecorded, **green glass Radams**. Definitely an English made example from the distinctive crude glass shoulder finish.

Left: The standard mid amber example alongside the very striking green 'gem.'

Above: The ultimate Tippecanoe? Normally found in shades from light amber through to deep red amber this exceptional rare green example sold for a cool approx. £7,000!

Above: The recently discovered incredible green glass, English made, Radams Microbe Killer - a world first after decades of collecting - what next?

