



Vojtěch Scheinost

### History of match production in Sušice

It is not really known who invented the first combustible match. However, the name that is important for Sušice match production, is Štěpán Röhmer. Röhmer was a Viennese pharmacist who started the production of combustible matches at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Vojtěch Scheinost** was a carpentry apprentice in Vienna in 1826 and when he completed his apprenticeship he started to work for the pharmacist Röhmer. Scheinost was employed to make a **'wooden wire'** which was essential match production. At Röhmer's, Scheinost met Marie Ubancová. She let Scheinost into the secret of preparing the chemical mixture. In Autumn 1839 Scheinost and Ubancová left Vienna and moved to Sušice. Shortly afterwards, they applied for a permit to start producing matches. On 31.10.1839 the Sušice authorities granted the permit.

The beginnings were difficult but, now newly married, the Scheinosts started to work with great enthusiasm. However, they were in need of finance and as it often happens in life, they had to turn to a stranger for help. They approached the wealthy local businessman, **Bernard Fürth**, who started to supply Scheinost with the necessary goods, materials and also cash. This support made Scheinost so dependent on Fürth, that it was Fürth who eventually became the owner of the match factory, and Scheinost was the director and production manager. Since production soon could not match the demand, both Fürth and Scheinost aimed to enlarge the production premises. So a decision was taken to build a **new factory**. The permit to do so was granted on 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1844 and the first two buildings were completed by December the same year.



Bernard Fürth



Dr. Ernst Fürth

Five years later Bernard Fürth died and left behind a flourishing business whose **products were known all over Europe**. The heirs insisted on the condition stipulated by their grandfather - no member of the Scheinost family was allowed to work in the match factory. Scheinost could see no other alternative but to leave, which he did in 1865. Two years later he founded the new Upper Match Factory in Sušice. In the 1890<sup>s</sup> it began to be clear that there were more matches than were needed on the market. No wonder, since at that time there were 20 big match factories in Bohemia. In 1890 the company was taken over by the grandson of the co-founder



**Length of the route:**  
3 km (slow walk about 1 hour)

**Level of difficulty:**  
medium, suitable for small children and families

**Marked:**  
**YELLOW**

**Route description:**  
Svobody Square – V Brance – 28. října Bridge – T.G.M. Park – Sušice Hospital – K Vyhlička – Krásná Vyhlička Observation Point

**Elevation difference:** 262 m

**The largest match in the world** can be found in the museum in Sušice. It was made in the SOLO factory in 2008. It is nearly 3.6 m tall, and the top of the match measures 7 x 7 cm. A similar giant match was lit by striking it against a small box of matches.



of the Sušice match industry Bernard, the grandson of the who was an excellent who was, two years later, a graduate chemist.

founder, businessman and joined by his brother Dr Ernst Fürth,

After long years of negotiations between the different companies who were competing on the match production market, it was agreed to combine the six largest Austro-Hungarian factories into the **Solo Factory for Matches and Polishes, plc, with its seat in Vienna**. Both of the Sušice factories were amongst them. The public limited company received the financial support of the Provincial Bank and therefore production could be rationalised and the technical equipment modernised. Before the war, most of the SOLO production was for export. In 1922 the companies merged and the Czech assets of the Viennese SOLO plc were taken over by HELIOS Ltd. and a new company was born: **„SOLO“**

**Czechoslovak Match and Reagent Factory with its seat in Prague** – the Prague SOLO company comprised the Sušice factories and also two more factories – one in Třešt and one in Bernartice. The Prague SOLO company with the brothers Fürth on the Board of Directors, kept buying shares of Slovakian, Polish, Hungarian and Yugoslavian match factories, and thus they built the foundations of the SOLO industrial emporium.

The companies were merged in 1938. The new company was of prime importance during the wars, producing chemical substances. The SOLO concern came to an end as a result of the historical events that followed. After the Second World War (on 7. 3. 1946) a state company called **SOLO, factory for matches, a state company residing in Sušice** was established and its name was changed to **SOLO SUŠICE State Company** by an amendment dated 10. 7. 1949.

During the privatisation process this company ceased to exist and new company was established in 1996 **SOLO SÍRKÁRNA, a.s. with its seat in Sušice**.

Production was modernised and extended even after 1996 when two more lines for match production were acquired and the automatisation of the production line reached its peak. In 2006 more than 400 million boxes of matches were shipped out of the Sušice factory, out of which 85 % were for export. Nevertheless, in 2008 match production in Sušice ended and the machinery was sold to India. The 170 year old tradition of match production was over not only for Sušice, but for the whole republic.



### Buildings connected with the production of matches:

**Upper Match Factory (1)** – founded by Vojtěch Scheinost in 1865, the last day of match production in this factory was on 11.3.1932. Production of a completely different kind was started in the SOLO building the production of impregnated containers, see-through packaging and containers made of acetylcellulose.

**House no. 135, Svobody Square** – this is the house of the Fürth family and the descendants of the family, who now live in the USA, used to come to the house for holidays. The Fürth family, being Jewish, fled to America before the war, and after the war the two daughters of Ernst Fürth rented the house to





the local national committee to be used as a library. In 1961 the house was expropriated by the district national committee. Nowadays, it is owned by ZKD Sušice and there is a grocery store in the house.

**House no. 6, Svobody Square** – this is the house where Vojtěch Scheinost, who brought the secret of match production to Sušice from Vienna, used to live. There is a memorial plaque on the house.

**Daliborka** – a large house situated near the SOLO factory at the crossroads of Pravdova, Masarykova and Nádražní Streets. Since 1921 there were flats for factory officials here. Thanks to its typical castellation, the house was named Daliborka (as in the Daliborka Tower at Prague Castle).

**SOLO match factory** – once the most important factory in Sušice. The factory was built in 1844 and it was continuously extended and modernised. In the entrance foyer you will find a plaque dedicated to Dr Ernst Fürth.

**Health and Community Centre** – the SOLO company built this centre for its employees in 1930, which clearly shows the high level of social commitment of this company. This very modern building, that was unparalleled in its time, was built in Nádražní Street where the river branch had been filled in.

**Houses nos. 520, 519, 925, 812, 442, 357, 356** called **'Solohouses'** – these residential houses were built for the SOLO employees by the company on the site of a former river branch.

**Šumava Museum** – the museum features a huge collection of stamps and boxes with matches dedicated to the history of match production in Sušice. The Solo company presented the museum with several old match production machines that no longer met the requirements of modern production. The museum exhibition was put together in 1959 on the occasion of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginnings of Sušice match production.



# SUŠICE – PRODUCTION OF MATCHES



# SUŠICE – PRODUCTION OF MATCHES

BEAUTIFUL RAMBLES AROUND SUŠICE



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