

Following the request for some input for the THG Journal, I had to think and look deep into my collecting history in order to find something that might be appropriate. So here are a few images of rather special telephones that long ago were in my collection, but which I have exchanged over the years for apparatus for my 'latest' collection (now for almost 25 years), namely telegraphy. I have exchanged all of them, except one (see further down), for telegraph equipment. So, I can't do more than make the mouth of some of you watering!

Most probably some of you can write down interesting comments on one or more of those in the next Journal, for instance on the 'billiard table' instrument, as I don't have any information on it.

This telephone was by and large the only telephone that my wife liked and that she allowed me to display in our living room. But it was also the first one that I swapped for a telegraph. And no, that has not been a case of divorce... I was able to exchange it with a foreign (meaning not Belgian) museum for a Hughes telegraph. That was a unique opportunity as normally, at that time, a Hughes telegraph was far out of my reach (see a picture in my article 'Werner Siemens and his contributions in the field of telegraphy' in THG Journal no. 87, Summer 2014, page 12, photo 17).

There was no manufacture's name on it but it is most probably a Mildé (France) from 1892.



The nickname of this rare telephone is, for evident reasons, the 'billiard table'.



I am not sure whether this well-known pattern of telephone was made by Hasler (Switzerland) or Bell Telephone Manufacturing Company (Antwerp, Belgium) as both (and probably others) have made the design.

Three 'butter stamp' transmitters/receivers by Siemens & Halske (Berlin) and two by Bell, all from the early years of telephony (late 1870s).



This microphone with carbon rods (below) was from a Belgian inventor, Mr. De Jonghe. It found its way to a few other countries for a couple of years but soon became obsolete.

On the outside of the telephone's wooden case are several stampings in the wood, among others: PATENTS: APR 18 1878 - MAY 17 1878 - AUG 21 1880 - JULY 20 1880. The microphone is of the Blake pattern. So I think that this telephone here must be from the very first generation of telephones ever put into service in Belgium (which is the reason that I kept this one...).



The 'history' of this one (right) is described in the book Bell Telephone Manufacturing Company 1882 - 1982 that celebrates the 100 years existence of Bell in Antwerp (the book I have is in Dutch, I am not aware if an English version exists). It states: The International Bell Telephone Company (IBTC) was founded in 1879 in New York by Gardiner Hubbard with the intention of introducing the telephone into Europe. Already in 1880 they established their European headquarter in Antwerp. IBTC did not have own production facilities and so it imported equipment and apparatus from the USA. There they obtained it from suppliers of the American Bell Telephone Company such as Williams and Gilliland and then, beginning in 1882, also from Western Electric.

