

## Introduction

In September 2015 I got a phone call from a 92-year old lady. Her husband, who used to work for a telephone company, passed away and she was cleaning the basement. She did find something and asked me to come along.



*The donor*



*The Directaphone, as found*

I got the equipment and on first sight it looked like a front door intercom system. At least the loudspeaker looked familiar to me

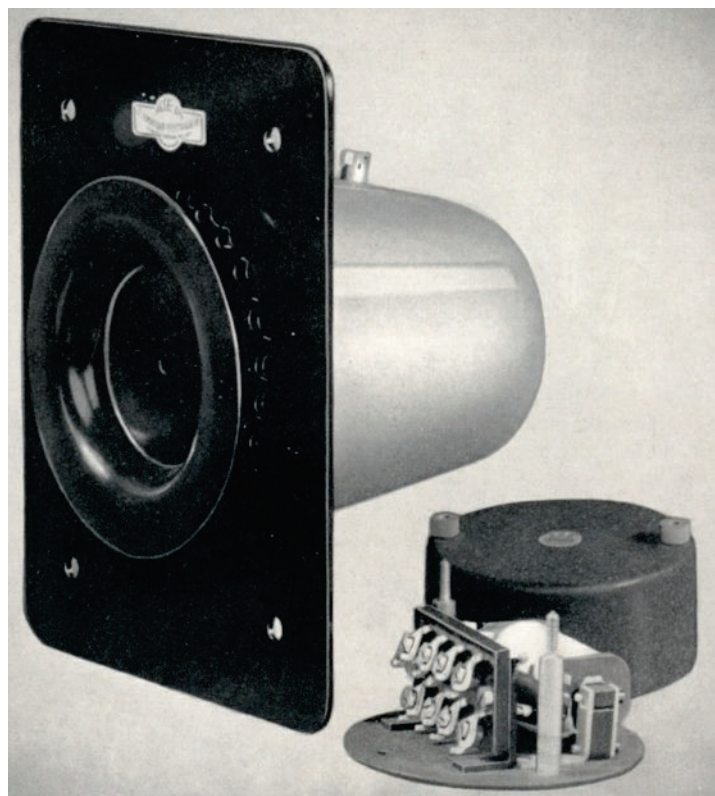
## What is it?

By looking in my archives, I did find a commercial folder of a product called "Directaphone". This was an intercom system for small businesses.

## How does it work?

The boss had such a device on his desk. He could call up to five of his employees by using a key at the bottom of the device. He, and only he, could call those people.

Those people could call him, but not each other. A rather patriarchal type of communication, if you look to it with the eyes of today. All communication within the company has to pass through the manager!



*Speaker unit*

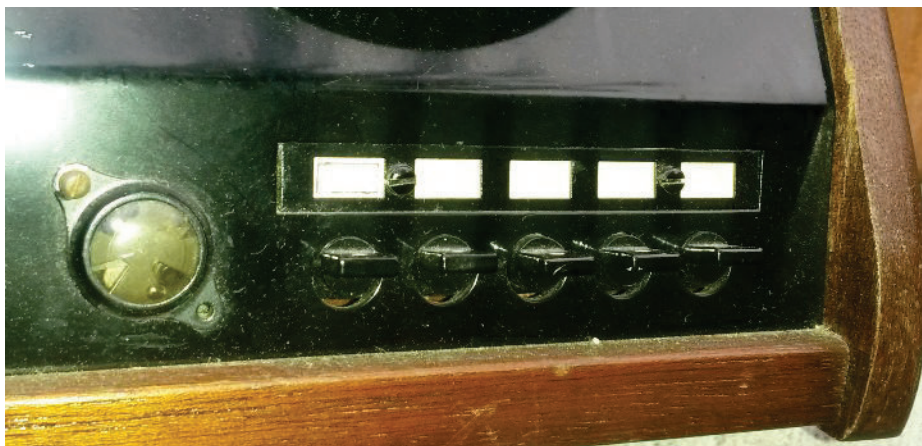


## The components

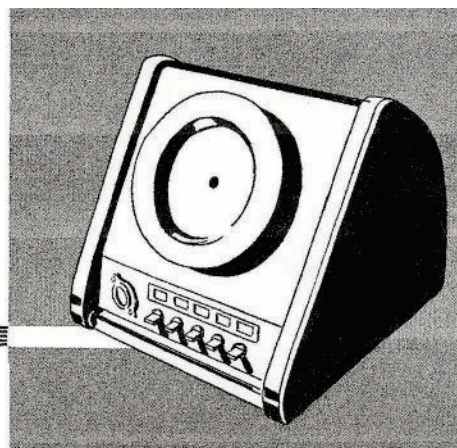
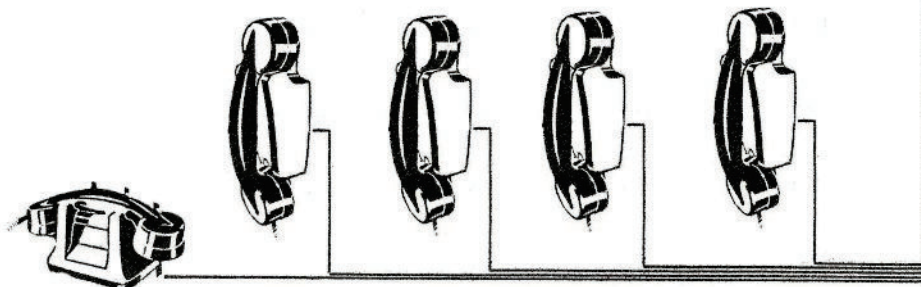
The core component is the hands-free speaker set, known from an existing 1940s front door communication system. The table or wall phone, typically a Novophone, at the other end, had appeared already in a 1940 catalogue.

The keys and the star indicator are borrowed from a 1950 key system. The combination with the mahogany wooden cabinet gives a real vintage look.

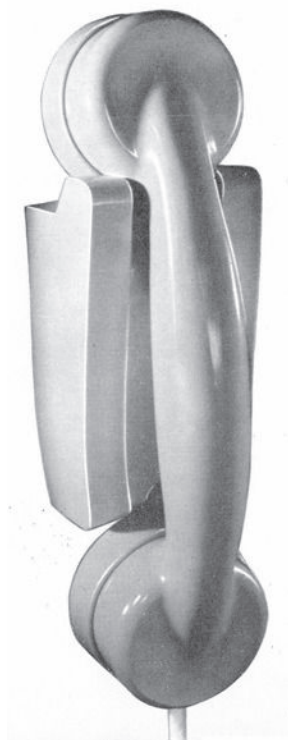
We learned from the archives that this product was launched in 1952.



*5 keys to reach slave stations*



*Directaphone overview*

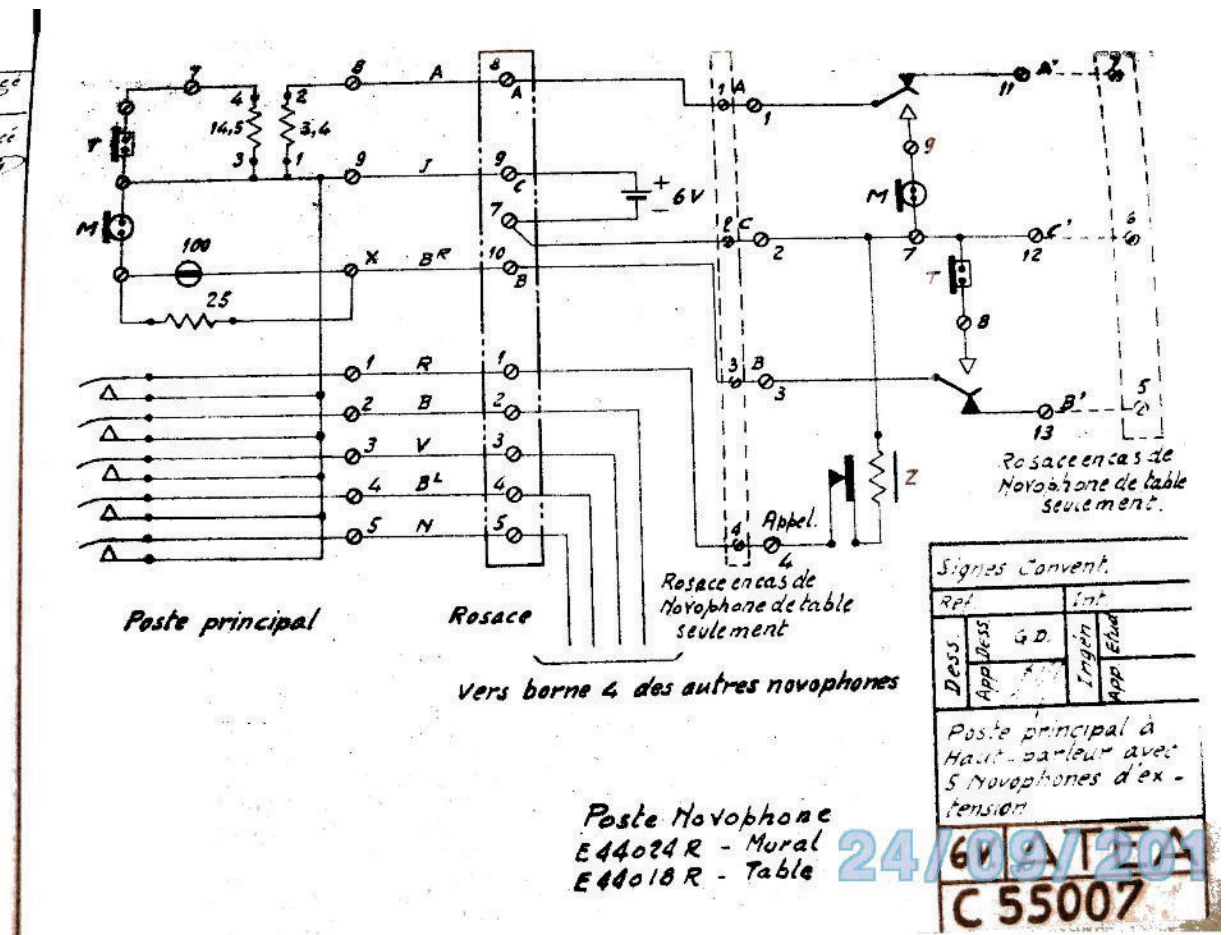


*Novophone wall telephone*



*Keys and visual indicator from a 1950 key system*





Directaphone circuit diagram

## Brewery in an exchange?

From the THJ

The original story appeared in the THJ for 1994.

The licensee of the Golden Galleon (now the Cuckmere Inn) at Exceat Bridge, near Eastbourne, had a redundant exchange building in his car park and turned it into a micro brewery. It was called Cuckmere Haven and the picture shows it in its heyday in 1997.

Sadly it closed in 2003 but the brewing equipment was sold to Harveys' of Lewes for use as a pilot plant.

The building is evidently still there as the bottom view from Google shows.

Discussion on the Facebook Group in August 2023 was of the opinion that the building had, in fact, housed river level or flood warning equipment linked by telephone line. This is based on its siting next to the river and being too far from neighbouring Seaford.

The building design is one of the MPBW standard small type often used for telephone exchanges, but not exclusively.



Picture above from <http://breweryhistory.com>  
 Picture left from Google.