

TELEPHONE

TELEPHONE

PUBLIC
TELEPHONES



British
TELECOM

Introduction

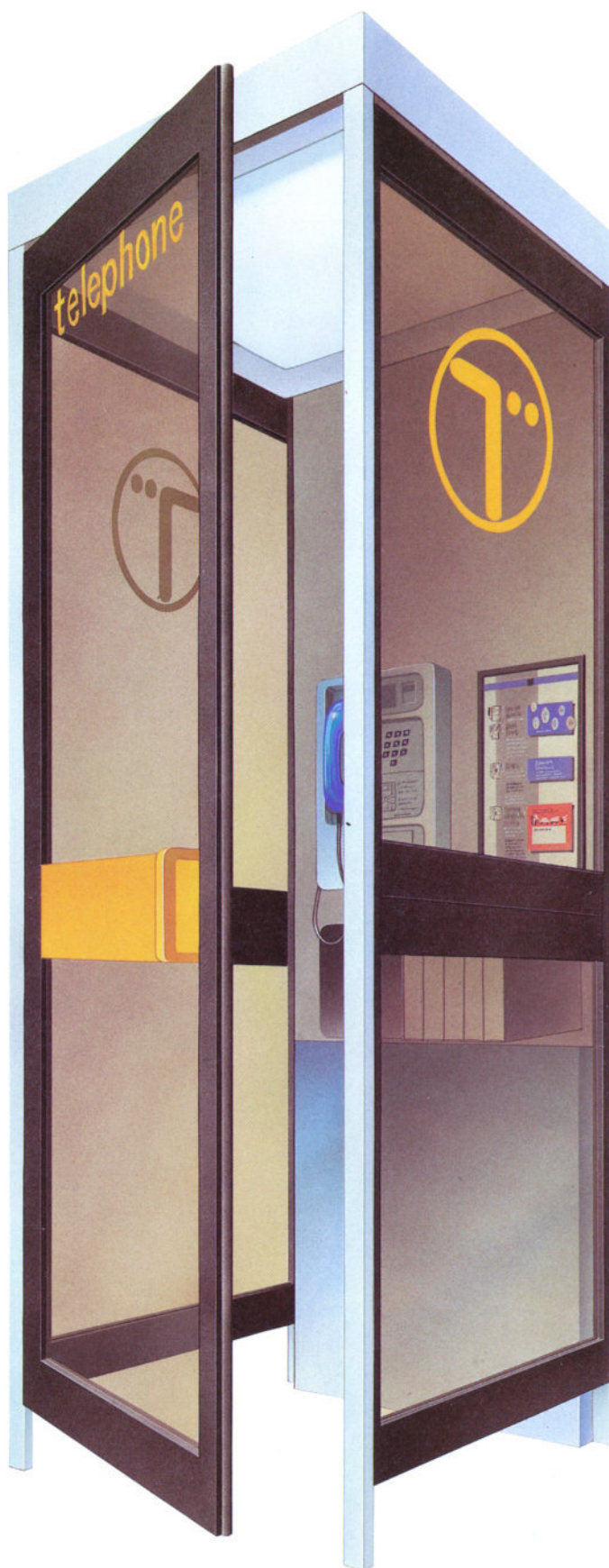
The telephone was invented just over 100 years ago and today the number in the United Kingdom has reached 30 million and is still rising all the time.

Most of these are for domestic or business users but there are also 367,000 public telephones, either kiosks, booths in airports or railway stations or rented phones in shops, hotels and hospitals etc. The development of these public telephones is a fascinating story and this book, part of a pack for primary schools, uncovers many interesting facts and stories both of social history and design.



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British Telecom Education Service would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr Brian Burley and the children in his class at Mossford Green Primary School, Barking, Essex.

YOU MAY
TELEPHONE
FROM HERE

TODAY

▶ When you need to make a telephone call, look out for this sign.

Many kiosks have the new push button keypads.

▼ Kiosk number 8 is still the standard. The first ones were built in 1968. They have large window panes made from toughened glass. The frame is made of cast iron.

The kiosk is made in seven parts and it is very easy to clean. It looks very modern doesn't it? It was designed to be as strong as possible and to blend in with any surroundings.



▼ If you have visited an airport or a large railway station, you may have already seen and used a 'blue pay-phone' like these. The phones are in open booths and have a push button keypad. To make a call at one of these payphones you lift the receiver and put in your money without waiting for the 'pip pip' signal. They even return any unused coins to you at the end of your call!



Some of the latest payphones use these green and silver cards instead of coins. Using hologram light patterns on the cards, they can show how many units are left after each phone call.



TOMORROW

▶ The public payphone service will soon be fully electronic. From 1985 a new range of modern kiosks will be seen. Mobile payphones on trains and express coaches will also be installed.




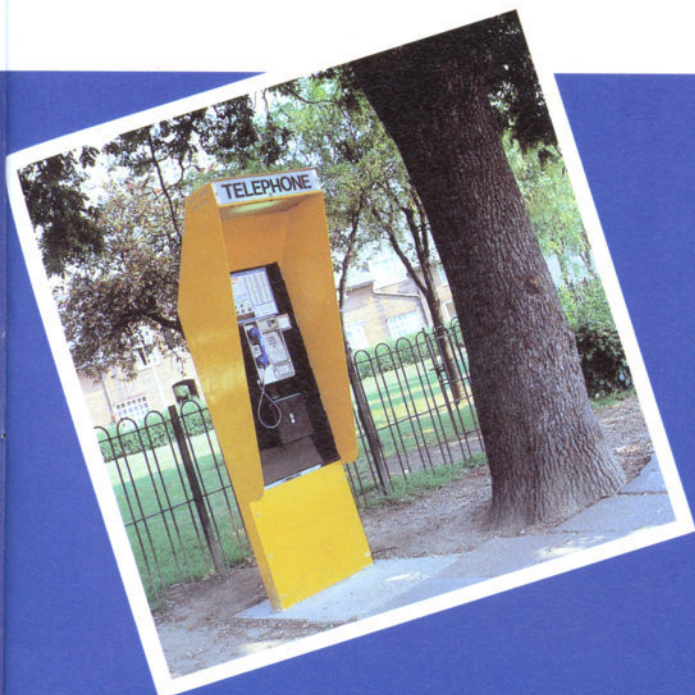
QUESTION

Have you seen one of the new telephone kiosks?





 The new telephone booths come in a range of designs.



Everywhere in Britain


DID YOU KNOW...


■ There are 367,000 British Telecom payphones in Britain, 77,000 of them are in public kiosks.

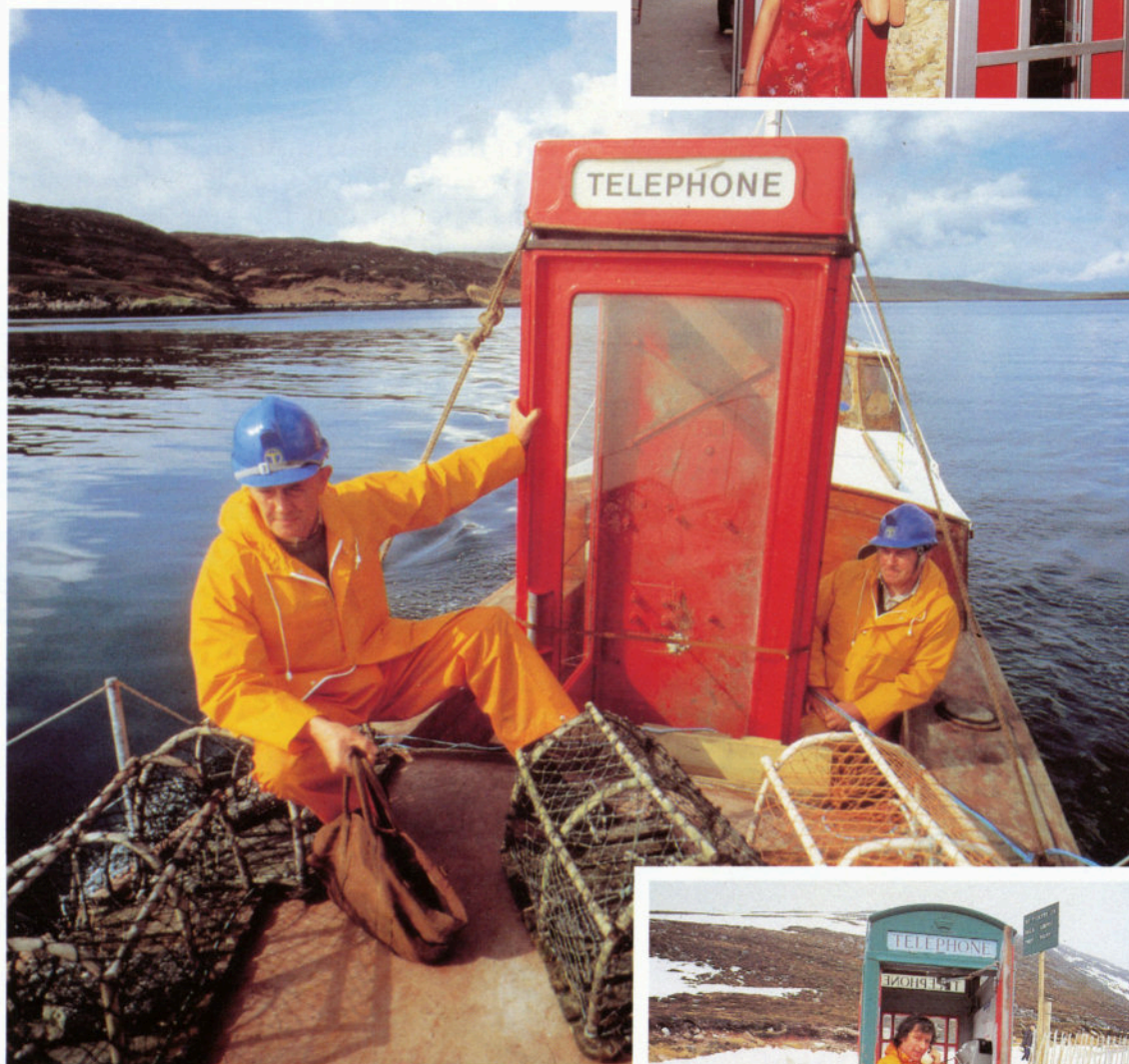
▢ This telephone box is on its way to America. It was a gift from the city of Portsmouth.


▢ This telephone kiosk is being flown out to the United States Eighth Air Force Museum in Louisiana.




 The new Pagoda phone was built for London's Chinese community.

 Kiosk number 8 – first appeared in 1968. By March 1983 there were about 11,000 of them all over Britain.




 The number 8 kiosk is being taken by boat to a remote Scottish Island where half of the people living there rely on the public payphones.

 This telephone kiosk is the highest one in Britain. It is in Aviemore in Scotland.



The first public call boxes




 An early 'Silence Cabinet'

THREE MINUTES TALK FOR ONLY TUPPENCE

When this notice first appeared on a small wooden hut in Bristol in 1886 people were a little puzzled by what it meant. They soon found out that for only 'tuppence' they could make a telephone call. ('Tuppence' is just over 1p.)

For this was the first public call office. At this time there were only about 13,000 telephones in the whole of the British Isles. Many people had not seen or used one. Many thought that the new invention of the telephone was just a toy for the rich. But now they could, for only 'tuppence', make a telephone call to other people lucky enough to have a telephone.

 The first public call boxes were built in large towns and cities. Private companies like the Sheffield Telephone Exchange were set up to install telephones and to build public call boxes.

As you can see from this advertisement, emergency calls could be made free of charge.



QUESTION

Where do you think the first Sheffield public call box was placed?

There was lots of competition between the different companies. The National Telephone company gradually became the largest company in the country. Although it called itself 'National' most telephones and call boxes were in the towns.

PUBLIC NOTICES. THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY, LIMITED.

CALL OFFICES have been established at the SHOP of J. & B. BAIN, 13 PANMURE STREET, and at the COMPANY'S OFFICE, 13 PANMURE STREET, where any Member of the Public may converse for THREE MINUTES with any SUBSCRIBER in DUNDEE, BROUGHTY FERRY, NEWPORT, and TAYPORT on Payment of THREEPENCE, with ONE PENNY additional for each Extra Minute.

Arrangements are being made for Opening CALL OFFICES in the East and West Ends of the Town and at Newport and Broughty Ferry.

SUBSCRIBERS to the NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY ONLY will be allowed to SPEAK to FORFEAR SUBSCRIBERS on Payment of SIXPENCE per THREE MINUTES' CONVERSATION, and ONE PENNY for each Additional Minute.

FRANK W. LUMLEY, District Manager.
District Office, 13 Panmure Street, Dundee.

CHILDREN'S FREE DINNERS.

The Committee will be pleased to receive Subscriptions to enable them to give Soap and Bread to Hungry Children by the Distress which exists.

THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY, LIMITED.

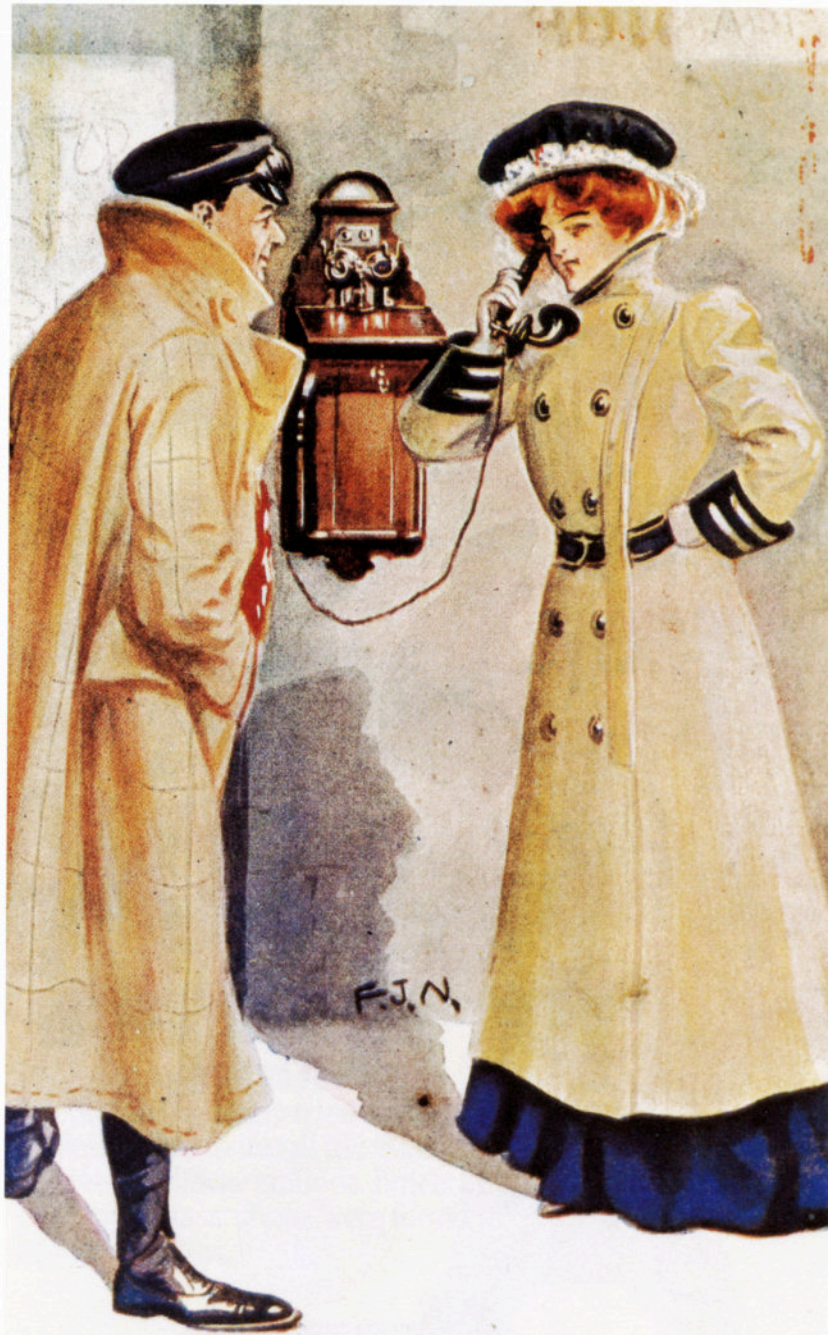
empowered by Licence from the Postmaster-General to open "CALL OFFICES," where Any Person, not a Subscriber, may converse with any Subscriber to the Exchange System (within a radius of Six Miles) on payment of a Fee of Threepence, for Three Minutes' conversation, and One Penny for each additional Minute.

FREE MESSAGES can be telephoned from Call Offices at undesignated addresses:—

THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY, LIMITED —
District Office, 28 Market Street.
THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY, LIMITED —
Railway Arches, Wellington Road.
THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY, LIMITED —
133 Union Street (Ellis & McHardy).
THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY, LIMITED —
44 Union Place (Wm. Bain).

NOTICE.—Subscribers can only use these Offices, or other Subscribers' Instruments, on producing the Call Ticket supplied by the Company. Subscribers

standing upright. Heavy sea still running." EXTENSION OF TELEPHONE FACILITIES IN DUNDEE.—The National Telephone Company have made arrangements by which the general public may participate in the advantages of the telephone. Two Call Offices have been established in the centre of the town, where any one, for a charge, may converse with subscribers in the district. Similar Call Offices are to be established at Broughty Ferry. We learn that the company contemplate telegrams by



METROPOLITAN CALLS ONLY.
AUTOMATIC BOX. (Ind. Reg. Wap.)

The National Telephone Company, Limited.

PUBLIC CALL OFFICE.

TARIFF.

LOCAL CALLS (Metropolitan Exchange Area).
For every 3 minutes conversation, or part thereof (whether originated or received), a fee of **2^d.**

INSTRUCTIONS.

TO CALL THE EXCHANGE.—Turn the handle, place the receiver to the ear, tell operator the Exchange and number of the subscriber required, then wait with the receiver to the ear, unless the operator says she will ring you.

When requested by the operator, but not before, place two pennies in the slot and press the button after the insertion of each penny, still keeping the receiver to your ear. The operator has the means of checking the amount. Bent or misshaped Pennies must not be used.

If more than 3 minutes conversation is required the extra money must be put in at the request of the operator. Callers are only allowed 5 minutes continuous conversation.

When your conversation is finished, replace the telephone on its rest and turn the handle.

NOTES.

Unless the telephone is on its rest you cannot call or be called.

Unless the key in the handle of the telephone is kept depressed you cannot be heard by your correspondent.

When two Subscribers are connected, and one of them leaves the instrument, his telephone should be replaced on its rest, the other Subscriber keeping the receiver to his ear and replying promptly should the operator ask if he has finished.

The handle should never be turned except to call the Exchange or to get disconnected.

If Subscriber required is engaged, ask again after a short interval.

The metal passes which were some time ago issued to London Subscribers, are obsolete. Persons producing these passes will be charged the same rate as charged to a Non-subscriber.

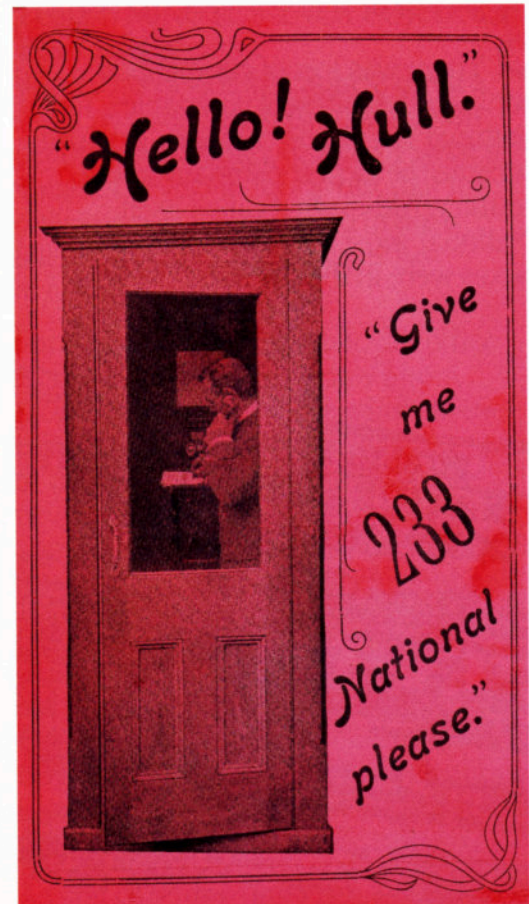
The Clerk-in-charge of the Exchange will reply to enquiries. Operators are forbidden to converse with Subscribers.

The public are notified that their strict adherence to the above rules is absolutely essential, and that only by this can efficient working of the system be attained.

Wm. H. L. GADNER,
GENERAL MANAGER

▲ Inside the 'Silence Cabinet' you would have found a handset, a coinbox for your money, and a set of instructions on how to use the telephone.

At that time the telephone was called a handset and was in two parts. The speaking part and the listening part were separate.



▲ To make a call you would ask the operator for the number. Perhaps, "Give me 233 National please" as on the poster. You would then put your money in. Once you had paid for your call the operator would connect you.



▲ If you had wanted to make a telephone call in 1906 you would have probably visited your local general store or chemists. Here you would have found tucked away in the back of the shop, a 'Silence Cabinet' like the one in the picture.

Silence cabinets were made of wood, and although called 'Silence Cabinets' were probably not very silent or soundproof.

Phone companies like the National Telephone Company tried to find the busiest places to install the 'Silence Cabinets'. Railway stations, hotels and busy 'high class' shops were found to be the best sites.

QUESTION

How is making a call from a 'Silence Cabinet' different to the way we make a call from a modern payphone today?



The sign of the Blue Bell



▲ What would you have done if you couldn't find a 'Silence Cabinet' in your local store or chemists?

Well in 1907 you would probably have looked for the 'Blue Bell' sign of the National Telephone Company.

Building call offices or kiosks in the street was becoming more common by this time. They could be used at any time and with more privacy.

By 1907 The National Telephone Company had 7,800 telephone call offices spread around the country.

The Company was always looking for busy new sites for their call offices and the 'Blue Bell' sign soon became well known.

▼ Here you can see a photograph of a small iron kiosk (taken about 1911). It was built at the side of the road in Holborn, London. This call office had an attendant to help the public.



QUESTION

Call offices were often built near lamp posts. Why do you think this was?



 But in 1912 a new sign had begun to appear. The Post Office had taken over responsibility for all the telephones and call boxes. The new sign showed a lion, crown, shield and a unicorn.



The first street kiosks



As you have seen, most of the first call offices were placed in busy shops, and were looked after by an attendant. However, not everybody liked to visit a shop to make a telephone call. Some shopkeepers only allowed their best customers to use the phone. Other shopkeepers would pretend that the phone was out of order. Another problem with shop call offices was that when the shop was closed the phone could not be used.

◀ To overcome these problems telephone companies began to build call offices or kiosks in the streets. They were about the same size as telephone kiosks today, but were up to two feet taller.

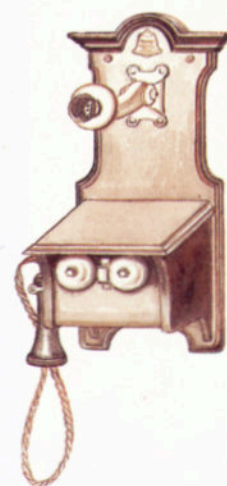
At first they were built from wood and were of two different kinds. The first kind was the automatic-lock type. To enter you had to insert a penny (or two halfpennies) into the lock. The second kind had an attendant who made the call to the operator and collected the money for the call. Once the call had been connected the attendant would step outside the call box.

Gradually, automatic kiosks became more popular than the attended type. People enjoyed placing their own calls using the new instruments. They also felt that their calls were more private without the attendant listening in outside the box.





↑ Stations were very popular places for the siting of call boxes. The picture above shows a call box on Portsmouth railway station in 1905.



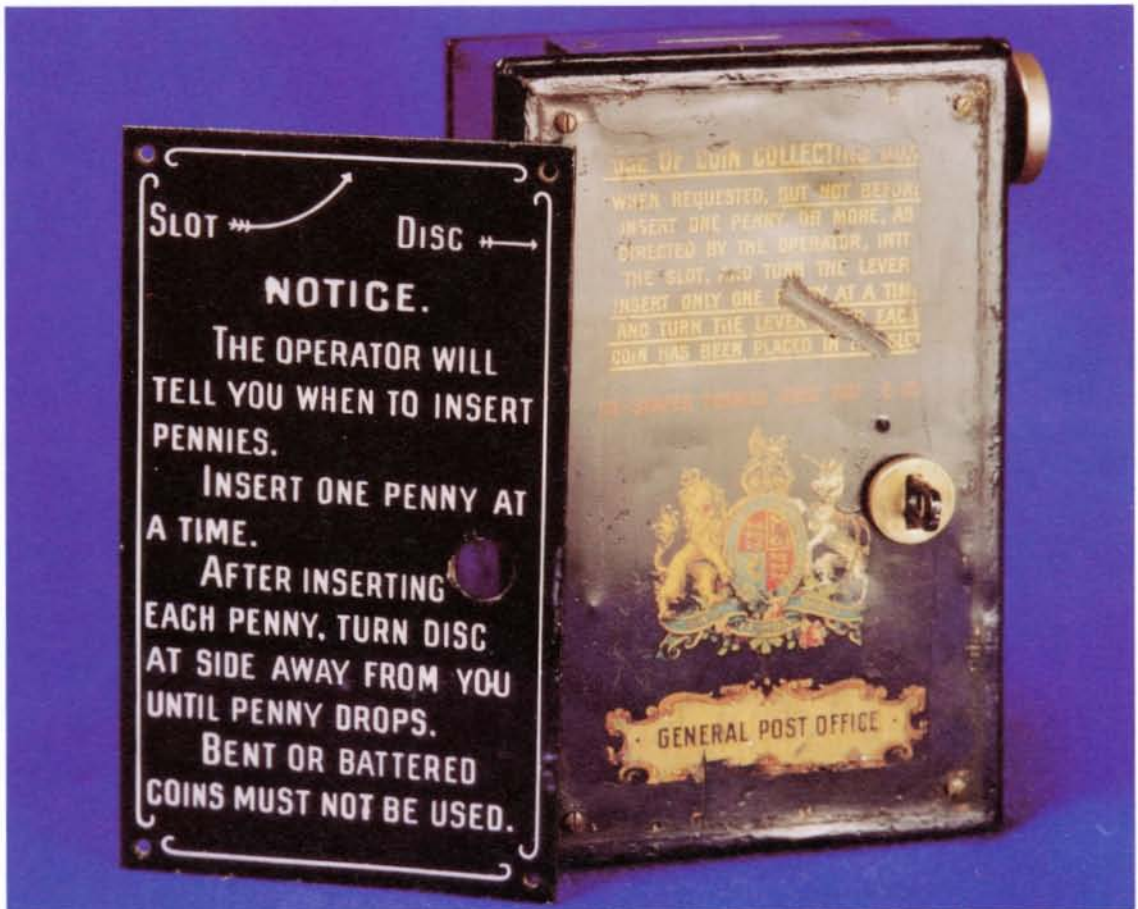
Listen for the coin to drop




 A coin operated phone.

The first coin box telephones were not very strong and they were quite hard to operate.

The operator would only connect you when she had heard the coins drop into the box. Sometimes this caused problems. It certainly did for Samuel Wartski! On a December day in 1907 he tried to make a call from a Bishopsgate street call box in London. The operator didn't hear his money fall and refused to connect him. Angered by this Samuel tried to break into the coin box to get his money back. He failed but was arrested, charged and fined for causing 95 pence worth of damage to the box.



 Instructions on how to insert your money.

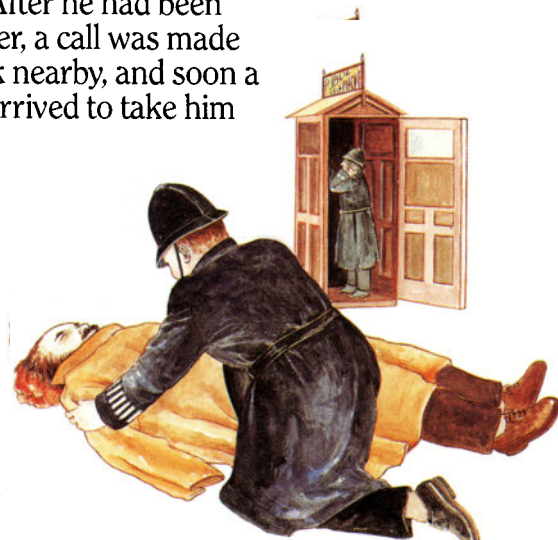
QUESTION

What was the only coin you could use in this box?



▲ The police found the new telephone call boxes very useful in an emergency like the one above. They were often given a key to the call box and could make free calls to their station. Often these calls resulted in the saving of a life. Such a call was made on the night of 16th February 1907,

when two policemen noticed a man drowning in the river near Thorpe Station, Norwich. After he had been pulled from the river, a call was made from the new kiosk nearby, and soon a horse ambulance arrived to take him to hospital.



All shapes and sizes



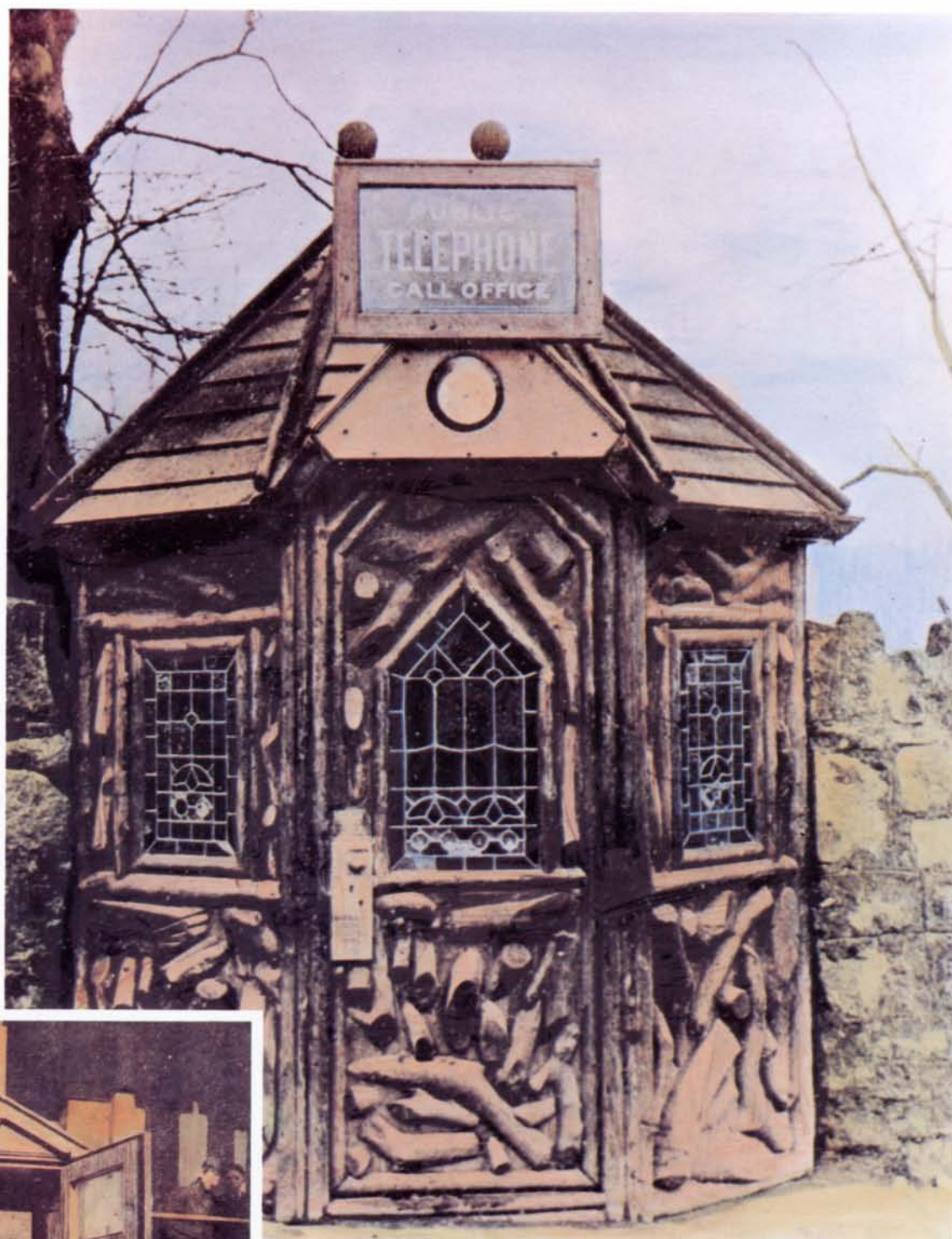
When you think of a telephone box you probably think of the well known red kiosk with a domed roof. But in 1912 when the Post Office took over the telephone network, kiosks came in all sorts of shapes and sizes, and were made from several different materials.

There were kiosks in many large towns and all cities, but there were still very few in country areas.

◀ Coin-operated 'Norwich' Kiosk.



▲ This kiosk was built in Folkestone in about 1909. It was designed to look like a garden shelter and to blend in with the trees behind it.



▲ This very grand kiosk was sited at a tram terminus near Blackburn. It was designed to look like an Edwardian garden shelter. It was a very large kiosk, measuring 1.95 metres by 1.70 metres. It had an automatic electric light, a red wood tiled roof and a clock.

◀ 'Wilson C' kiosk.



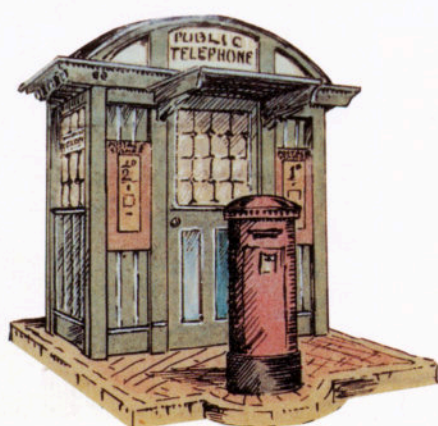
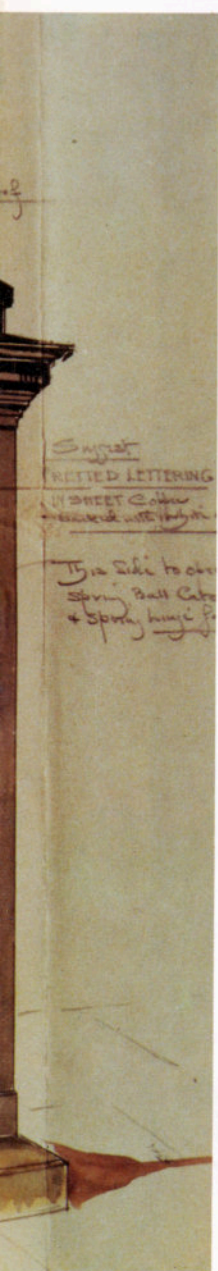
After the end of the First World War the Post Office felt it was time for the whole country to have a telephone box of exactly the same design.

Many local councils felt that Call Boxes should be made to fit in with the surroundings. What do you think about this?

◀ In 1921 Kiosk number 1 appeared. It was made from concrete and was shaped rather like the old wooden kiosks.

The first one cost £35 to produce, but they were soon being made for only £15.





It was decided that there should be a competition to see if a better design could be found. These are some of the designs.

The winner of the competition was...

Victory for Sir Giles Gilbert Scott



▲ Kiosk number 2. The winning design by the architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott was built in cast iron.

Kiosk number 2 weighed 1½ tons.

It had more room inside and let in more light through its larger windows.

It became very popular in London and the larger towns.

You may still see number 2 kiosks when you travel in London.



Courtesy of the British Architectural Library/RIBA.

↑ Sir Giles Gilbert Scott was asked to design a kiosk for use in areas of special importance.

↓ The kiosk was to be made from concrete.

As you can see from the picture, kiosk number 3 was painted a stone grey colour.

Concrete was found to be a rather fragile material.



Kiosk number 4 was called the 'vermillion giant' because of its huge size.

As you can see it was not only a phone box but also had a post box and a stamp machine.

Only 50 of these 'giants' were made.

The 'vermillion giants' were not very successful because people who were making calls were disturbed by the noise of the stamp machine. Because the kiosks were often placed in open places, the rolls of stamps often became soggy in damp weather.

You may still be able to see a 'vermillion giant' in use in a few places.

Kiosk number 5 was an experimental one and there are no surviving pictures of it.

What do you think kiosk number 5 looked like?





1936 was the Silver Jubilee year of King George V. To mark this very special occasion Sir Giles Gilbert Scott was again asked to design a new telephone kiosk.

◀ The 'Jubilee kiosk' was rather like kiosk number 2 but if you look closely at the windows you should see an important difference. The vertical bars are spaced further apart. Why do you think this might have been an improvement?

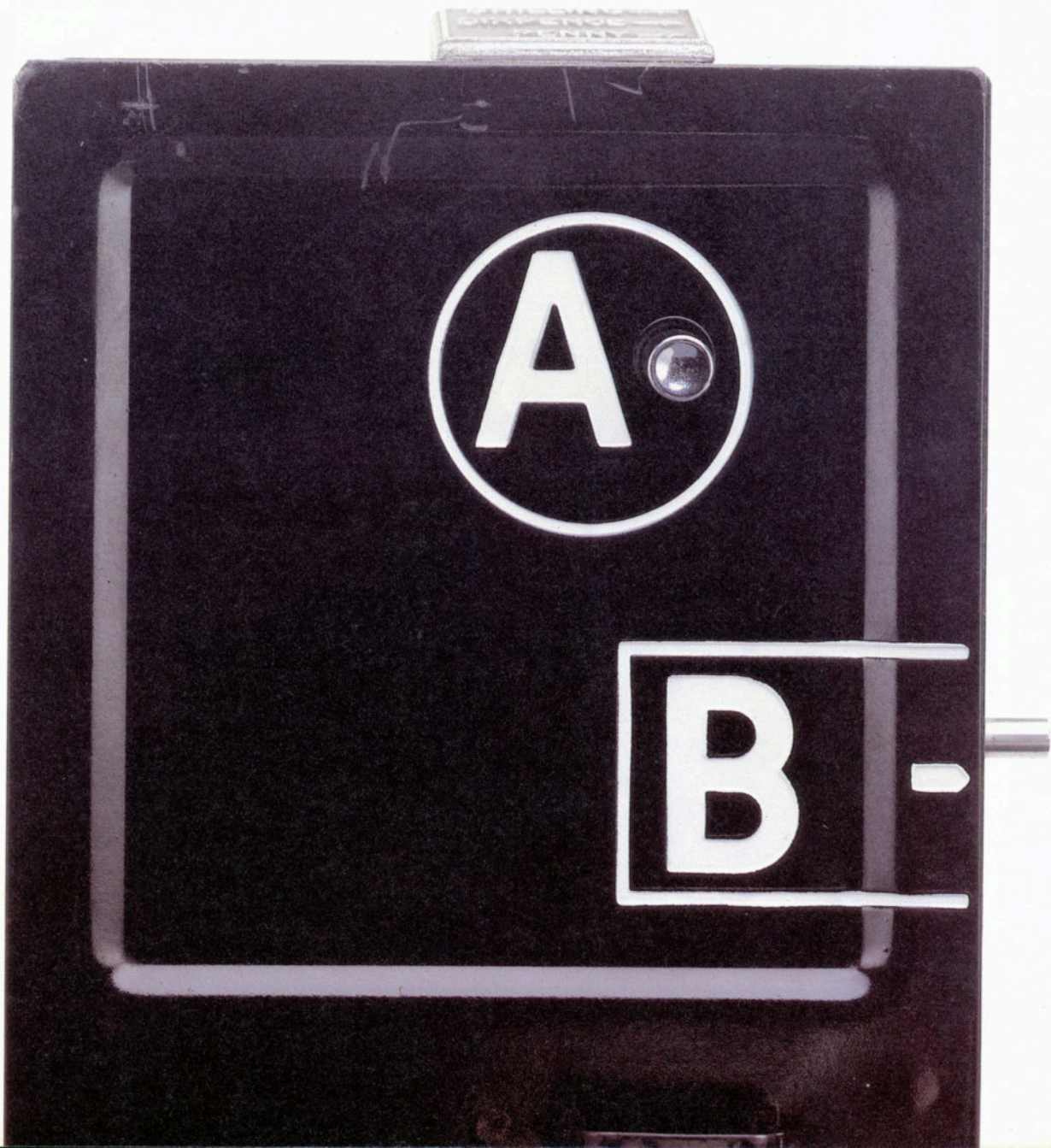
The Jubilee kiosk became the most popular of all the kiosks and for the first time the same kiosk could be

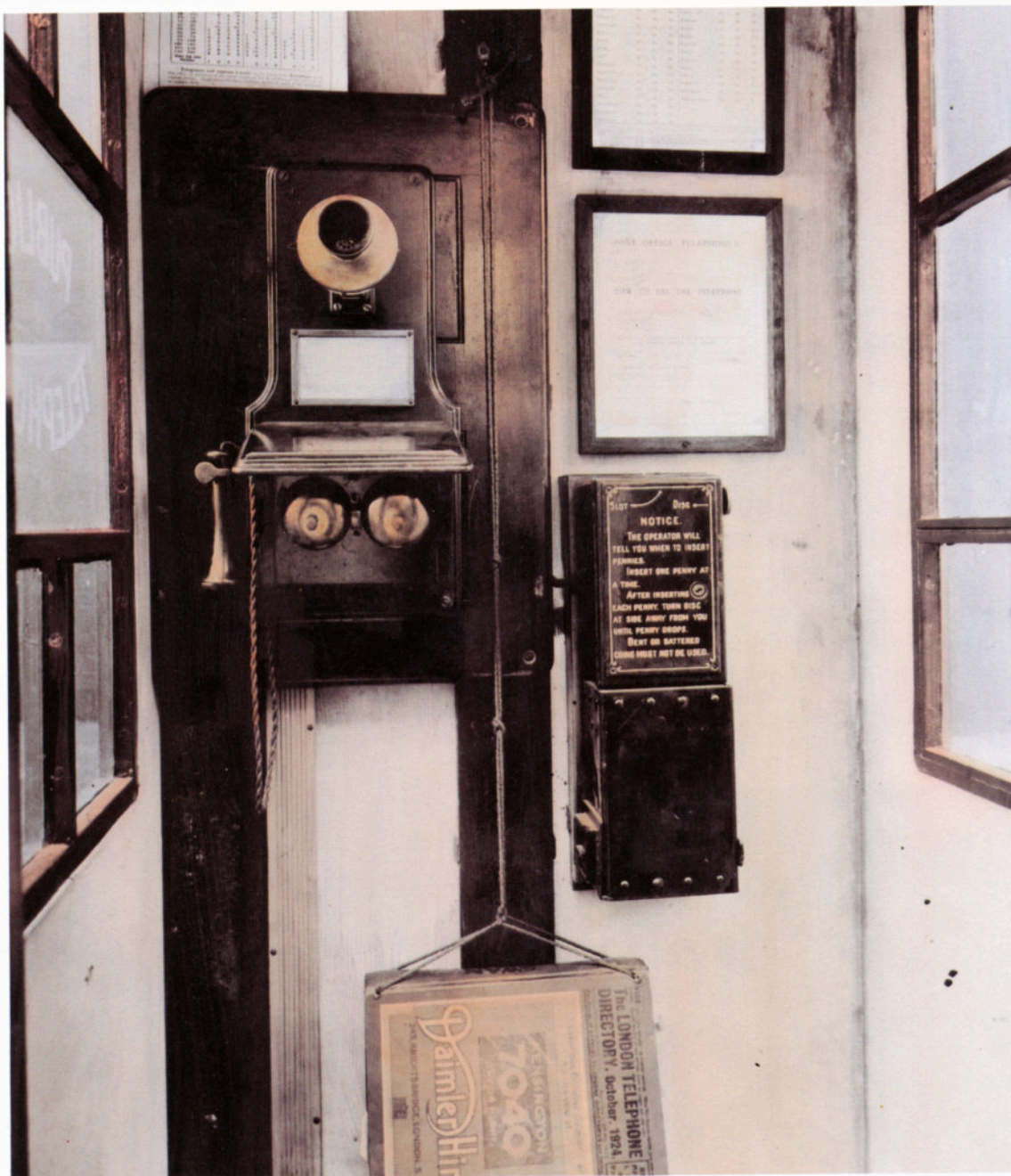
found in every part of Britain – village, town, city and countryside.

Kiosk number 6 had a writing shelf, a place for parcels and was lit by a timer controlled light.

The kiosks were painted in a cheerful red, so that people could easily recognise them.

If you wanted to make a call you put in your coin first, then you dialled the number. If there was no answer you pressed button B and your money was returned to you.





Here are two pictures taken 38 years apart.

The picture on this page was taken in 1924 and shows the inside of kiosk number 1.



QUESTIONS

Can you spot which was the speaking part and which the listening part of the telephone?

Do you think a small child would have been able to use this kiosk?

Can you work out from the instructions how to insert your money?



This picture was taken in 1962. It shows the inside of a 'Jubilee' kiosk – Kiosk number 6. Notice the press button B type coin box.

QUESTION

How can you tell by looking at the two pictures that there were many more private telephone owners in 1962 than in 1924?





A new aluminium box, kiosk number 7 was tried out as an experiment in London in 1962.

As you can see from the picture it was a much more modern design than the 'Jubilee'. It had straight lines, clear windows, and a new type of door handle. It was 35 centimetres shorter than other kiosks and had the latest dialling equipment.

People liked kiosk number 7 but unfortunately it was not strong enough to stand up to the British weather.



When you think of a telephone kiosk you probably think of the crimson 'Jubilee' kiosk. The reason red was chosen was because red is a bright colour which stands out.

If you were a stranger to an area you would, in an emergency, be able to find a red kiosk very quickly.

But people have often complained that a red telephone box spoils areas of natural beauty.

Kiosk number 8 had the same straight lines and was introduced in 1968. At this time the Post Office was very worried about the number of kiosks that were being damaged by vandals.

The Post Office was determined that kiosk number 8 would be as strong as possible. Coin boxes were made from reinforced steel. Telephone cords were made stronger and windows made from shatterproof glass. The large, clear windows helped to deter vandals. Kiosk number 8 is made in seven main parts and is especially easy to clean.



In 1966 vandalism was costing the Post Office £½ million every year. On average every phone box was being vandalised twice a year.

People suggested ways kiosks could be made safe from vandals. Several suggested having an automatic door lock which trapped the vandals inside.



QUESTION

Can you think of any other ways of stopping vandals damaging payphones?



The 'Oakham' was designed to be vandal proof.



Reward

'Malicious damage to telephone kiosks'

A reward of up to £25 will be paid by the Telephone Manager, Liverpool to the first person who gives information to the police leading to the apprehension and conviction of any person or persons wilfully damaging telephone kiosks or their fittings in this locality.

Any information should be given to the police at once by dialling 999 and asking for Police, or by contacting the nearest Police Station direct.

A new range of up-to-date telephone booths will be seen on Britain's streets from 1985. They are easier to clean, cheaper to maintain and more vandal proof.

All new booths have the latest push-button electronic payphones and allow easier access for wheelchair users.

Some use credit cards instead of coins which makes long distance calls easier. There is no cash box to attract thieves so there would be fewer faults caused by vandals.

The new kiosks come in many designs.



Places to visit

Things to see

■ Visit the Telecom Technology Showcase, 135 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4AT.
Telephone 01-248 7444.
Open Monday to Friday 10.00 am to 5.00 pm. Admission is free.

In this museum you will be able to see a collection of photographs which show how the public telephone developed. You will also be able to see a reconstruction of a National Telephone Company 'Silent Cabinet' with the original coinbox from 1910/1911. Also on display are a 'Jubilee' type kiosk and a wall mounted Blue Payphone and Cardphone.

■ You can also visit British Telecom Museums in Norwich and Oxford. Admission is free.

If you want to visit either of these museums ring 0603-22611 for Norwich and 0865-246601 for Oxford to find out the hours of opening.

■ See also the Telecommunications Gallery of the Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7. Here you will be able to see Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's stone coloured kiosk number 3, and trace the history of public and private telephones from the earliest times.

The Science Museum opens Monday to Saturday between 10.00 am and 6.00 pm.

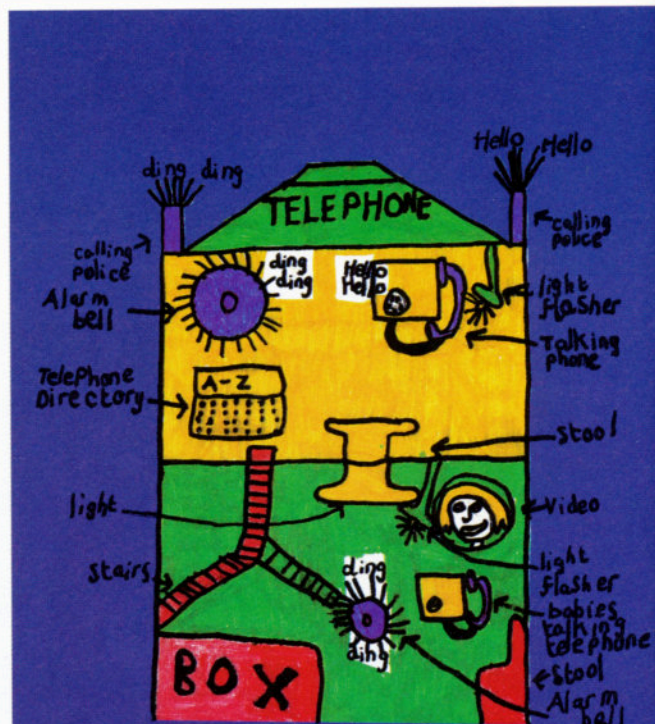
Telephone 01-589 3456.

Take a good look at telephone boxes when you travel. Look carefully at the embossed crowns on the 'Jubilee' kiosks. The older ones belong to the reign of George V and later ones to the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. You may see a number 2 kiosk in London.

If you visit a railway station look out for wooden platform kiosks which date back to the beginning of this century.



Children's design ideas for telephone kiosks of the future.



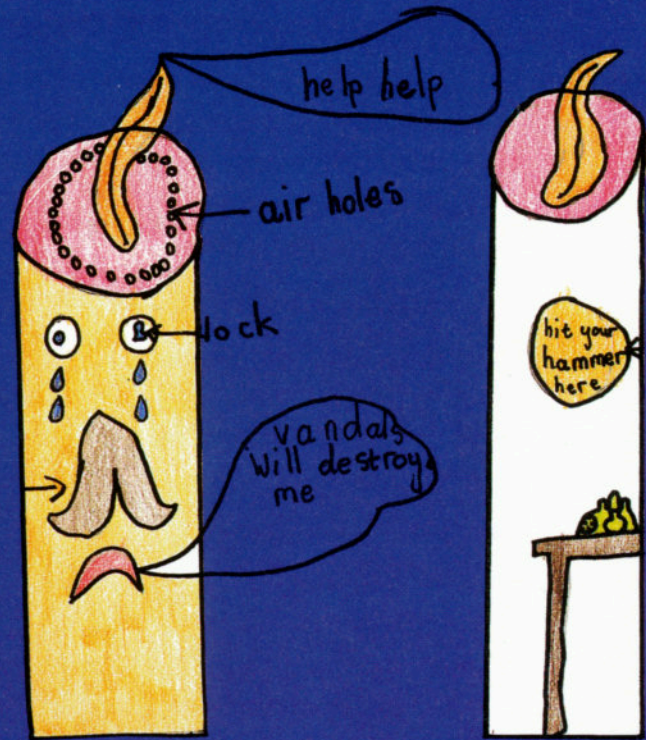
Nicola Sherman



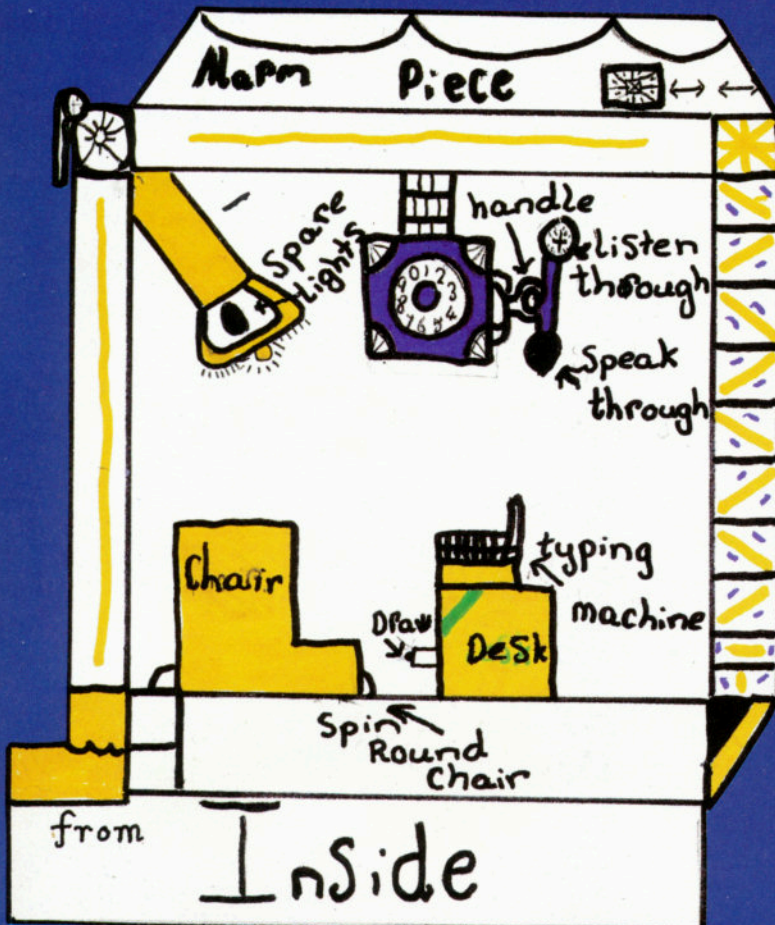
Malcolm Houston



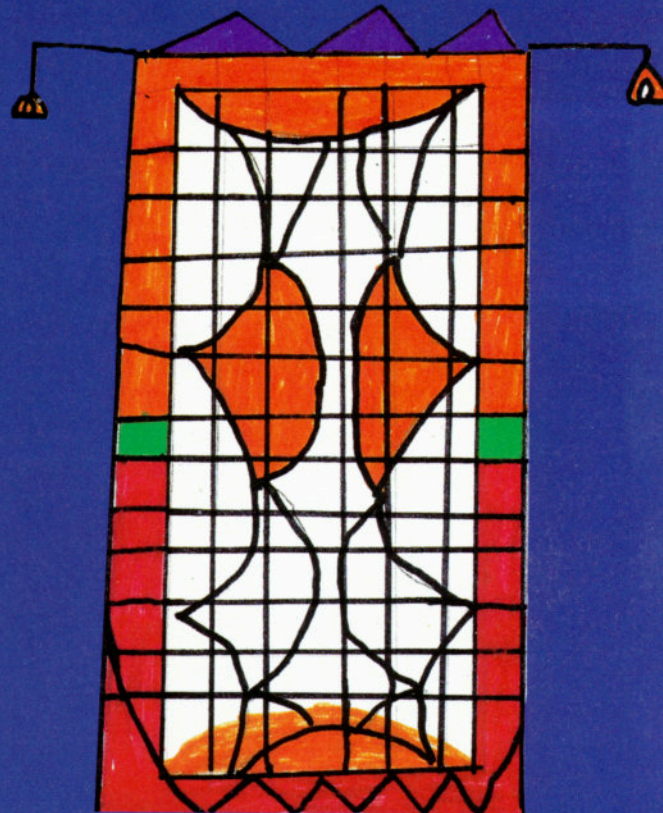
Rachel Thompson



Tara Atkins



Claire Hayward



Louise Taylor



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