

First Payphone in Belgium – Addendum

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In *Singing Wires* of April 2021, an article was published “First Payphone in Belgium, Circa 1913”.

In September 2021 TCI members Stefan Biesemans and Jan Verhelst could visit the depot of the museum of Art and History in Brussels. This museum “inherited” the telephones of the former telecom museum.

The payphone that was described in the article was a coin box made by a company called “**Contrôleur Automatique de Téléphone**” connected to a regular BTMC telephone.

To our great surprise, we found in the depot of this



Fig. 1 - Integrated Payphone



Fig. 2 - Label Integrated Payphone



Fig. 3 - Label Distributor

museum a payphone from the same company where both the coin box and the phone were integrated in the same housing (Fig. 1).

This payphone was made by the same company “**contrôleur automatique du téléphone**”, but distributed by another company “**La Téléphonie privée**”. This is a

Belgian company that was founded in 1896, and mainly addressed businesses.

There was also a French company with the same name, but so far we have not been able to find out if there was a link between the two.

The foundation act of the Belgian company (founded in 1896) does not show a reference to the French company nor to the French shareholders.

There is a suspicion though, considering the advertisements of both companies “**téléphonie privée**” are similar. ☎



Fig. 4 - Téléphonie Privée, advertisement Belgian Company



Fig. 5 - Téléphonie Privée, advertisement French Company (Courtesy Alain Groult, chairman of the French collectors club)