

PHONE OF THE MONTH: GTE MICRO-FONE

by Jan Verhelst, Belgium

At the end of the 1970s VISA was automating their credit card verification process to avoid fraud.

They came in touch with GTE, who wanted to offer VISA a phone with a built-in credit card reader. GTE subcontracted

The whole software program was contained in 4 KB ROM! So credit card verification could be done over a telephone line (Fig. 2), without the necessity of a person at the other side.

Motivation for GTE was to “gener-

The first systems were marketed in the US under the name GTE MICRO-FONE. GTE was the only supplier in the US for up to 2 years. Derived versions of this phone were delivered worldwide under different names such as DATEA2000, DIAMOND,



the whole project to their subsidiary GTE ATEA in Belgium. In a few months a phone was designed (Fig. 1) from scratch, with

- a built in credit card reader,
- a 300 baud modem, and
- a Motorola 6802 processor.

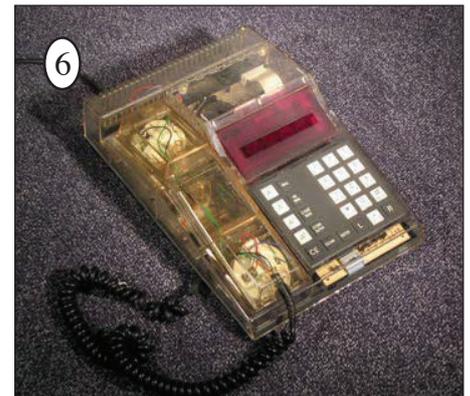
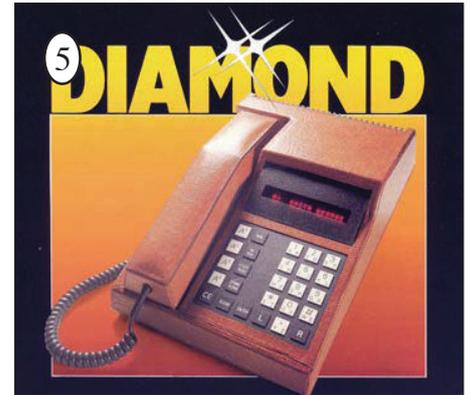


ate” traffic for their brand new X.25 packet switching network.

And what was unusual in those days: phone numbers could be stored in the phone’s memory! It featured a separate REDIAL memory (not the more familiar last number redial memory) and four one-button PRIORITY calling numbers (Fig. 3).

Alphanumeric and numeric input could be given in a rather unusual way using the internal magnetic stripe reader.

Optional PIN-pad, printer (Fig. 4) and light pen reader were used in point of sale, electronic verification and electronic funds transfer applications, among others.



DATEAPLUS, Cliniphone, etc. Some of them were feature phones.

The DIAMOND was marketed to executives. It included a clock with appointment reminder and stopwatch, and came in either ivory plastic or leather (Fig. 5).

A transparent version was made for demonstrations (Fig. 6). Marketing literature and more photos are in the Bonus Pages. ☛



COMING IN MAY

Here is a sneak peak at a unique part of the Phone of the Month selection for May, 2014. Some of you will no doubt recognize the part, but we suspect that the majority will not. If you have a unique telephone, please send us a photo or two and we will be in touch with you right away. Everyone enjoys surprises from time to time and readers would like to see phones from your collection.

Page 4, TCI Singing Wires, April 15, 2014