

**Christoph T. M. Krause – The Drum Dial – Vol. 3**

**Selected Passion**

along with a Travel Report to Sri Lanka

## **About this book.**

In volumes 1 and 2 by the author we already learned a number of significant facts about the somewhat antique telephone Drum Dial FgTist 261/264 from the 1950s. Volume 1 introduced the exterior and interior in detail, whilst Volume 2 dealt with the history of its patents, right up to the final, innovative and future-oriented design.

Volume 3 now looks at a completely different aspect, namely the sentiments and passions that it triggers and continues to fuel within its worldwide fan and collector community. Why on earth are people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – in the age of smartphones and Artificial Intelligence (AI) - still interested in a phone from a long-forgotten era, a device that is over 70 years old, but that is still usable and works without problems? What does this device trigger in technology and design enthusiasts alike and how far does this passion go?

The author Christoph T. M. Krause himself is hopelessly drawn to this little device and thus has created a contemporary work that, even today, introduces new friends to the Drum Dial and holds up a mirror to the passion of the old “cracks”. The story of the Drum Dial FgTist 261/264 is far from over. Let's get into this homage to a very special design gem indeed.

**Christoph T. M. Krause**

# **The Drum Dial**

**Vol. 3**

**Selected Passion**

along with a Travel Report to Sri Lanka

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## **Note Concerning the Subtitle.**

This book was translated from German into English by Anja Kadir who is a bilingual native speaker.

The German subtitle cannot be translated in an easy or simple way into English because in German it has two implicated meanings:

**“Gewählte Leidenschaft”** means

**“Chosen passion”** and at the same time:

**“Dialled passion”**.

So we had to think about an English word for either **chosen** and **dialled** which could be able to express both different meanings with the help of a single expression. Ultimately our decision was

**“Selected passion”**

thus we hope it can transfer both meanings in a proper way. If you, as a reader, have different or better ideas, feel free to contact the author under:

**[kaybook@netcologne.de](mailto:kaybook@netcologne.de)**

**This book is dedicated to Hans-Werner L.**

## **Introduction by the Author.**

Collecting things, be it vehicles, books or, in our case, phones, is a hobby that fascinates many people and often keeps them busy for many years and ultimately fuels large monetary transactions. In most cases, the medium of collecting consists of countless and diverse elements, here in our example models and variations, which have been developed, improved and refined over time. In all variations of collecting, there are always particularly interesting, nostalgic or rare entities that stand out from the mass of respective units. In our case, it is undoubtedly the so-called Drum Dial, which actually carries the Siemens designation FgTist 261 or 264.

This device, which, in the early days of telecommunications, was only used in certain areas of application and was withheld from the general consumer community, still triggers a variety of desires and sentiments among collectors today, over 70 years into its future. Owning a Drum Dial phone is, at first, simply a matter of establishing a connection with the past, a past that may not even be your own because it occurred either before or shortly after your birth. The Drum Dial is reminiscent of a time when communication was not as fast-moving and digitalised as it is today.

Turning a telephone rotary dial or, in the case of a Drum Dial, pulling down the number drum always required patience and precision to create the desired connection. This slow and deliberate action con-

veyed a sentiment of deceleration that is often lost in today's hectic world. However, it should be noted that the method of dialling was state of the art at the time, so it was not perceived as a deceleration since it was not yet possible to do it faster or differently. Only today's users (who are almost exclusively nostalgic) experience the advantages and disadvantages of this dialling technology, having the right distance, and in full awareness of its differences.

The dialling process as such, whether it was a twisting or pulling moment, took time to complete, and you also had to grip the receiver and hold its weight, whether it came from the heavier Bakelite or from the slightly lighter but still quite weighty thermoplastic receiver, to put it to your ear and hold it there, often for a longer period of time (depending on how long you were on the phone for). The receiver had a certain weight not only from the weight of the material, but also due to accommodating the earpiece and speaker. This act of picking up the receiver alone required a certain amount of work or physical effort and often patience with oneself.

For many collectors, the Drum Dial telephone is therefore also a symbol of nostalgia and memories. For those born at the right time, it is reminiscent of their childhood days when analogue telephones were common in households and formed the center of a modern living unit. Some people covered it with a cloth in the evenings to protect it from the effects of dust and others put a brocade hood on it to make its mostly uniform grey appearance (at least with the

mass-produced TeTAP 611 ff) more interesting and more conducive to their own taste (at least in the 1960s and 1970s). At that time, the telephone product that predominated was a so-called “grey mouse”, although the use of thermoplastic made a variety of colours possible.

The shape of the Drum Dial was changed early on by replacing the heavy and breakable Bakelite with plastic, which made colouring possible. In Bakelite, the Drum Dial was only available in the “colours” black and ivory.

The ringing of an analogue telephone still brings back memories of long conversations with friends or relatives, sometimes lasting late into the night, for many who were born early enough (this means those born after World War II). Sometimes it's just the memory of your own mother, who retreated to a separate room or even just a pantry to talk quietly with her friend about "women's things" without being over-heard.

Collecting these devices now makes it possible to relive these memories and bring a touch of nostalgia and homeliness back into your home. Those born later, at whatever time, have also come to know and love this kind of reminiscence anew, even if there may be very few in relation to the general population who still appreciate this kind of nostalgia.

Additionally, collecting Drum Dial phones can also provide a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Every phone is unique and has its own story. Searching for rare models or finding devices in good condition requires time, patience and often research and opens up relationships with memories and past emotional worlds. At the same time, it allows for contact with like-minded people who share the same passion. When a collector finds a rare or particularly well-preserved specimen, it can trigger a feeling of joy and success, even a little enthusiasm and happiness.

Another sentiment, which may arise when collecting Drum Dial phones is excessive curiosity and inquisitiveness. Each phone has its own technical and special features and is often built marginally differently in detail. There are telephones with only one bell, others have two or even, instead of metal, glass bells (those were often used in the GDR (formerly also known as East Germany or officially as “German Democratic Republic”), since there was usually a lack of metal, people switched to other materials that were easier to use, available and cheaper.

Studying and exploring these details can contribute to a deep understanding of the development of telecommunications. It opens up the opportunity to learn more about the history of the technology and exchange ideas with other collectors. This has created a global collecting community that meets regionally, nationally and internationally.

In summary, collecting (Drum Dial) phones can evoke a wide range of sentiments, from nostalgia to deceleration to fulfillment and curiosity. It enables collectors to establish a connection with the past while at the same time living out and nurturing their passion for technology, precision engineering, design, beauty and history.

Let's delve into this special world of nostalgia by exploring these things using the example of our Drum Dial and perhaps becoming caught up in the virus of collecting.



## Chapter 1.

### Addictions and Dependencies.

Addiction is a complex and serious condition that can have a profound impact on a person's life. It is usually a compulsive desire for a certain substance or behaviour that continues despite usually negative or health-endangering consequences. Addiction can cause both physical and psychological dependence and has far-reaching effects on a person's physical, emotional and social well-being.

One characteristic feature of addiction is the loss of control over consumption or one's own behaviour. The data subject is unable to limit or stop their consumption, or in our case collection, even though they may recognise that this has negative consequences. These consequences can be varied in nature, the craving for the substance or behaviour becoming so strong that it dominates all other aspects of life.

An example (from a collector's recollections<sup>1</sup>):

*“A few days ago I visited another member of our guild and saw how he lives: he doesn't live with telephones, but in telephones! What's more, he rented an apartment next door to his large old flat and made a breakthrough; Now he has a huge apartment. He only lives in two small rooms and gives his devices the most space. There are boxes full of invisible things everywhere and every little*

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<sup>1</sup> Please also refer to the full report in annex 2

*room is filled with everything that the history of telephones has to offer. I'm shown around and even though I see so much that I've never seen before, I don't see anything. My capacity for taking everything in is limited. Is it my age or just the amount of impressions?*

*At the end of the day I realise that there are other levels of addiction and dependence and I go home feeling like I'm not that crazy, there are far "worse" cases (I smile at that thought!). And at home I talk about it and I still think: 'Now you finally know that I'm not that bad, there are people who are much "worse" than me!'*

*But then I see the red Drum Dial, it is bright, not to say screaming, red. Many people would probably scream: 'What an ugly thing, how can you put such a colour in your apartment!' But lately, for me at least, it has become one of the most valuable things.*

*When, in the evening, I open the package that my friend gave me, I am at peace with myself. The addiction has struck again, finally, after so many years of searching and begging, I finally managed to bring "him" home, to where his brothers in other colours had been waiting for him for many years:*



Image. 1. With kind permission from Remco Enthoven, California, USA, see also the title page and p. 43: **Krause, Christoph T.M.**, *The Drum Dial - The Forgotten Telephone Luminary of the Federal German Founding Years*. Tredition Verlag, Hamburg 2020.

This example illustrates another characteristic of addiction: A collector affected by addiction will need ever larger quantities of the substance or the collecting unit (in this case: telephones) in order to achieve the same and lasting effect of satisfaction. This often leads to a vicious circle, as the “increased dose” can in turn lead to more dependence and need and corresponding negative effects.

Withdrawal symptoms are another characteristic feature of addiction. If collectors try to limit or stop consumption or collecting, either due to reason or as a result of being forced to do so by third parties, unpleasant physical and psychological symptoms can occur. These withdrawal symptoms can range from restlessness and irritability to severe physical pain and cramps or even trigger depression. They also tend to increase the desire for the substance/

product or the behaviour that has manifested itself over the years, making it increasingly difficult to break such addictive habits. In addition, when collecting objects, these can incur high costs exceeding actual monetary capacity and plunge the collector into financial and social ruin.

Addiction also has a significant impact on a person's social life. Those affected often neglect their relationships, their work or their school obligations in favour of their addiction. This can cause them to isolate themselves from family and friends and have difficulty leading a normal life. It remains to be noted that addiction is not just limited to substances such as alcohol or drugs. People can also be addicted to certain behaviours, such as collecting or accumulating items, or gambling, playing video games, or the Internet. These behavioural addictions can have similar effects to substance addictions and should be taken just as seriously.

Overall, addiction is a complex disease with major impact on a person's life. It goes beyond mere consumption and affects all aspects of a person's life. Treating addiction usually requires professional help and support to break the vicious circle and regain a healthy and fulfilling life.

But as long as the affected person remains within a reasonable framework, at least when it comes to collecting phones, it shouldn't have to be something pathological per se, but can, within an appropriate

framework, also be an enrichment of joy and well-being.



## **Chapter 2.**

### **A Love for Objects and Things.**

The word “love” is usually used in connection with other people or pets and does not generally refer to objects or things.

That's why using it in connection with the latter is often misleading and irritating. Love for objects or things is a phenomenon that is often considered strange or unusual. It seems contradictory that people can develop emotional attachments to things that are essentially just material objects. Nevertheless, the love of objects is a widespread human behaviour that is deeply rooted in our species and can have various reasons and forms.

In this case, the term “love” must be applied or understood more broadly and can perhaps be translated more precisely as passion.

One possible explanation for the love of objects lies in human nature itself. As social beings, we look for connections and relationships, be it with other people, animals or even with things. Objects can bring us comfort, security and joy. They can remind us of past experiences or connect us to certain values and identities. In a way, they can even be a kind of substitute for interpersonal relationships or relationships with certain species of the animal world. However, these different forms of love do not have to be mutually exclusive. A collector can love

both his wife or his husband and at the same time the objects of his collector's passion.

Another reason for the love of objects lies in their symbolic meaning. Certain objects can have deep, emotional meaning for us, be it because of their history, their cultural value or their personal relevance. A family heirloom, for example, can not only have material value, but also represent or establish a connection to our ancestors and our own identity.

In addition, objects can also serve as an expression of our personality. We consciously choose certain things to express our preferences, interests and values. These objects can give us a sense of individuality and self-expression. They can help us understand ourselves better and give other people an insight into our personality.

Of course, it is also possible and often happens that the love of objects can also have negative effects and implications. If the emotional attachment to objects is practiced excessively, it can lead to compulsive collecting behaviour or excessive materialism. In such cases, the love of objects can interfere with a person's life and disrupt their inter-personal relationships.

Overall, the love for objects is a complex phenomenon that is based on various psychological, social and cultural factors. Although it is sometimes viewed as strange, it is important to recognise that this expression of "love" can form a valuable form of

emotional connection. As long as it is not excessive and does not obsessively influence a person's life, the love of objects can be a source of joy, comfort and self-realisation.

Let us remember the example from the chapter on "*Addictions and Dependencies*", where the limit to collecting telephones, viewed subjectively, should actually be assessed as having been massively exceeded, but no one outside of the collector's world is unduly disturbed or affected by this. Here it remains up to the person concerned to decide what is good or bad for them. If he were to become physically or mentally affected and could no longer look after himself without outside help, intervention would probably have to come from the outside.

The love for objects is not necessarily a cause for concern at first, it can lead to joy and enjoyment, but if it is carried out excessively, the affected person's social network may have to intervene.



Abb. 2

## **Chapter 3. \***

### **What makes the Drum Dial Special?**

#### **A Question for AI <sup>2</sup>:**

Let's ask artificial intelligence what it is, in terms of old, analogue telephones, that makes the Drum Dial so special.

The questions were:

- 1. Summarise what is interesting about old, analogue telephones.**
- 2. Summarise what is bad about old, analogue telephones.**

Answer 1.

Old, analogue telephones have a nostalgic appeal for some people and can also be interesting from a technical perspective. Here are some reasons why they might be considered fascinating:

#### **Aesthetic:**

Many old phones have a unique design and vintage aesthetic that is appreciated by collectors and enthusiasts alike. They can be a charming addition to retro decors.

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<sup>2</sup> Source, see info in annex 1.

## **Mechanical Components:**

In contrast to modern digital telephones, analogue telephones use mechanical components such as dials or buttons [*also Drum Dials or rollers, added by the author*] with physical contacts. This may be of interest to technology enthusiasts as it provides insight into how this older technology works, [*which often involves highly precise engineering, added by the author*].

## **Haptics:**

Using an analogue phone requires a different type of interaction than modern mobile phones or cordless phones. The turning of a dial, [*the pulling down of the Drum Dial, added by the author*], or the pressing of buttons, can provide a tactile experience that appeals to some people.

## **Quality of Sound:**

Some people claim that analogue phones offer better sound quality than modern digital devices. This may be due to the way analogue signals are transmitted and the way the earpieces and microphones in these devices are designed.

## **Valuable Collector Items:**

For collectors, old, rare or well-preserved analogue telephones can have considerable value. There is a market for antique telephones and some models

can be traded at high prices *[such as the rare colours of the Drum Dial, chestnut red, reseda green, dark green, cherry red, in addition to the usual ivory and black, which were the only possible “colours” for the Bakelite versions, added by the author]*.

It is important to note that the use of analogue telephones has become rare these days due to the advancement of digitalisation and the widespread use of mobile phones. However, they can still have an interesting and nostalgic appeal for some people *[or, for example, they are used by people until their death, as long as this is still technically possible on location. These people are, for example, end participants who reject modern technology and further developments or do not know how to use the same, added by the author]*.

Answer 2.

There are also some disadvantages and limitations to using old, analogue telephones:

### **Limited Functionality:**

Compared to modern digital telephones, analogue telephones often offer fewer functions. *[For example, once dialled, telephone numbers must be repeated in their entirety if the connection is not established, added by the author]*. You also may not have call forwarding, caller ID, or other advanced features that are common today.

### **Lack of Compatibility:**

Analogue telephones may not be compatible with the latest telephone networks or communication technologies. This can cause problems when used in modern environments. *[Routers, such as the Fritzbox, however, offer solutions by using analogue sockets so as to operate analogue telephones, added by the author].*

### **Maintenance and Repairs:**

As analogue phones use older technology, it can be difficult to find replacement parts or make repairs. This can lead to higher costs and longer downtime.

### **Restricted Mobility:**

Analogue telephones are usually connected to a fixed telephone line and therefore do not offer mobility like modern mobile phones or cordless telephones.

### **Quality of Sound and Transmission Problems:**

Although some people appreciate the sound quality of analogue phones, they can be more susceptible to interference and background noise. The quality of the connection may vary depending on the distance to the telephone network.

## **Lack of Integration with Modern Technologies:**

Analogue phones typically do not offer integration with other devices or services, such as VoIP (Voice over IP), smart home systems or computer applications.

It is important to note that these disadvantages are mainly due to the limitations and technological advancements compared to modern phones. For many people, the advantages and conveniences of newer technology outweigh the nostalgic aspects of analogue telephones *[when comparing the two, added by the author]*.



Abb. 3

## Chapter 4. Angelika in Action.

Angelika always told her daughter Hanna about a strange telephone that she had to use at her job at the Siemens factory in Berlin-Siemensstadt. The reason why she kept talking about it was that this device was so unusual that it was not officially used as a terminal device by the German Federal Postal Service, but Angelika did not know exactly why. All she ever said was that she and the other "misses" (as they were still called in her office in her day) had apparently been used as guinea pigs to test this device before it was released to the rest of humanity.

<input type="radio"/>		<b>0</b>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<b>9</b>		<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>		<b>8</b>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<b>7</b>		<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>		<b>6</b>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<b>5</b>		<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>		<b>4</b>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<b>3</b>		<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>		<b>2</b>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<b>1</b>		<input type="radio"/>

The pull number switch

She based her impression on the fact that this device did not have a rotary dial, as all telephones in the world had at that time, but a strange, wheel-like drum with 10 notches on it. These depressions in the material of the drum were each set in "small craters", which were lined up in two rows on the left

and right side of the drum and were marked in the middle by the numbers 0-10.



Image 4

For example, if she had to dial the number zero, she placed her finger in the corresponding hole and had to pull the wheel or drum vertically downwards. The “stupid thing,” as Angelika said, was that back then she had long, beautifully painted fingernails that regularly slipped out of the hole when she was pul-

ling downwards. Angelika then had to press the fork, end the dialling process and start again. It took her a while to get used to it, so that it would no longer happen so frequently. However, she often had to hold the phone with her other hand while dialling so that it wouldn't slip during the process.



Image 5

The receiver was not lying horizontally above the case on its cradle, as was the case with all the other telephones she knew, but was lying vertically in front of the drum with the “holes” and numbers.

Angelika liked this new way of placing the receiver as she now only had to place the receiver in one



Image 6

way. Normal telephones offered the option of hanging up the receiver with the cord to the left or right. Every time she wanted to grab the receiver, she had to look at how it rested and accordingly she had to grab it with her left or right hand to grab the upper part so that the earpiece was at the top and the mouthpiece at the bottom. This had now become easier and simpler.



Image 7

Angelika began to love this strange telephone because everyone who came to the office was regularly amazed by the chic device. Nobody had seen anything so extraordinary in their lives before and the “misses” often commented on it, such as:

*“The future has already begun!”*

*“Technology is getting crazier and crazier!”*

or *“They must be completely crazy!”*

and also:

*“Simply great!”*

*“What a design!”*

Or even:

*“You should request a black one, the flashy red one doesn’t suit you! I saw a black one the other day, that would be just right for you, it would go better with your neat and elegant, muted colours of your clothes!”*

Angelika made do with what she had, she also thought that red looked quite classy and since she was convinced that she was somewhat special, she believed it suited her best. To her, red represented energy and drive.



Image 8

After just a few years, Angelika's Drum Dial was taken away and she received a new, different device in ivory. The taste of the times had prevailed and

the “normal” round dial and the “colour” ivory became the choice for elegant people.



## **Chapter 5.**

### **Are Women Collectors, too?**

#### **A Satirical Look at a Serious Question.**

It is often said that men are hunters and gatherers. This is because they had to hunt during the Stone Age in order to be able to feed their clans, who remained in caves. Women were the actual collectors, as they collected herbs and other edible things locally and then prepared them in the cave, along with their men's meat.

In fact, hunting is also a form of gathering, only often involving more dangerous and laborious efforts. But women's gathering is somehow also a hunt for what appears to be edible in nature. In reality, the boundaries are fluid and complement each other rather than being mutually exclusive.

If we now want to transfer the Stone Age behaviour of homo sapiens to modern times and our special topic or product, telephones and in particular the Drum Dial, us collectors have to realise that it is mostly men who are involved in telephone collector associations and, in the spirit of the Stone Age, look for new acquisitions (meat) on the market (wilderness) in order to then get hold of them (in this case: telephones), bring them home (to the cave) and give them to their women to present prey. Most of the time "our" women (today, it can of course also be men who are waiting in the cave) are not particularly happy about this prey or, simply put: they don't know how this prey could be turned into

something edible. Instead, they complain or, at best, ignore what the men have brought home.

But we have discovered that women are basically collectors too. In principle, yes, but not in the case of telephones, no matter how beautifully designed they are, like the Drum Dial, they are at best not suitable for setting up in the cave (apartment), and will certainly not still their appetite. Women would never think of collecting something inedible and then just putting it on display. Women therefore seem to be condemned by their nature not to collect telephones under any circumstances and no matter how beautiful the Drum Dial looks, it is not enough to change women's minds.

Now us male collectors finally know that it is our genetically determined job to collect telephones and not that of women (or the men staying at home!). Women have far more superior tasks in the cave and some male collectors are of the opinion that this is a good thing!



Abb. 9



## Chapter 6.

### Why, Therefore, Do We Collect? An Overview of Opinions.

#### Quote 1. From a Study: <sup>3</sup>

*“Collecting is a behavioural phenomenon that has taken on a variety of forms of expression throughout human history. The existence of collectors and collections can be traced back as early as the fifth century BC (Olmsted, 1991).*

*The tendency to collect is inherent in all people. In Germany, for example, around one in three people are active collectors (Kleine & Jolmes, 2014), and this can also be confirmed internationally (Kossenjans & Buttle, 2016).”*

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<sup>3</sup> **Prof. Dr. Dahlhoff / Kunkel, Sandra** (2019). Das Sammeln und Kaufen von Contemporary Art. Ein Ansatz zur Erfassung von Motivation und Verhalten der Sammler. In (publisher) **Ders./ H. Dieter/ Prof. Dr. Mann, Andreas/ Prof. Dr. Wagner, Ralf**. DMCC – Dialog Marketing Competence Center. Arbeitspapier 19. Title: Ders (p. 1). University of Kassel.

Quotation - internal source notes:

„**Kleine, J. / Jolmes, M.** (2014): Sammeln: Im Spannungsfeld zwischen Leidenschaft und Kapitalanlage. Überblick, Charakterisierung und Motive des Sammelns. Berlin: Steinbeis Research Center for Financial Services.

**Kossenjans, J. / Buttle, F.** (2016): Why I Collect Contemporary Art: Collector Motivations as Value Articulations. Journal of Customer Behaviour, 15 (2), p. 193-212.”

## Quote 2. From a Storage Company's Website: <sup>4</sup>

### ***“Why do we love collecting?”***

*The reasons why people collect things are as diverse as the things themselves. Collecting often promises future financial or material benefits. For example, with investments such as stocks or real estate. In these cases, the things you collect can even serve as retirement savings. Vanity can also play a role when the things collected are used as status objects. Expensive watches or handbags, for example, are particularly easy to display in public. This is a way to get attention or be admired by other people. But in most cases, the interest in collecting is fuelled by a hobby or other passion that brings the collector joy. If curiosity, a thirst for knowledge or simply the fun of searching and selecting are the main motives for building a collection, collecting can last a lifetime.”*

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<sup>4</sup> DDS Conferencing & Catering GmbH, Berlin. URL. [www.mylager.de/warum-sammeln-wir-so-gern/](http://www.mylager.de/warum-sammeln-wir-so-gern/). Date last visited: 10.12.2023.

## Summary:

### Why Do People Collect Things?

The human being who acquires things and certain objects in order to collect them is a widespread behavioural phenomenon that is common for humans (but also animals). Like in the animal world, it is based on hoarding **food** in order to survive. There are many reasons why we humans still do it, even though we usually have enough to eat in our habitats.

For whatever reason, certain things arouse our **attention** or **fascination**, which can then develop into a **passion**. This could be vintage cars or even archaeological works of art, there are no limits to your imagination. Sometimes even living creatures are collected; there are cases where people take in hundreds of cats into their homes.

Objects can cause fascination due to a certain **aesthetic** or **beauty of form**, although this specific attraction always arises from subjective opinion formation and cannot be generalised objectively. In other words, not everyone finds a particular painting equally beautiful; some others may think it to be hideous. As they say: 'beauty lies in the eye of the beholder'.

However, collectibles can also be **monetary investments**, such as paintings or sculptures that promise to increase in value over time. This does

not always work and so, like stocks or securities, they run the risk of not fulfilling their investment and their supposed promise of **profit**.

In our specific example, namely a passion for collecting old and antique telephones, collecting can lead to international **friendships** and social **contacts** that bring people from all over the world together through collecting. Social media in particular has made the process of contacting, buying and selling goods across all borders possible.

Collecting can also mean that someone is particularly interested in an object because of a **passion** for **exploring** or expanding their knowledge in a certain area (e.g. precision engineering).

Ultimately, all of these elements of passion always appeal to the **emotional side** of the collector. This may be in relation to a childhood memory. As an example, one could cite a particular telephone in one's parents' house (perhaps a "Grey Mouse", as the FeTAp 611 was almost affectionately called) or if a very rare variant of the Drum Dial that a collector, after years of searching, is finally able to get their hands on, e.g. in cherry red.

Collecting objects is always healthy and "normal" if it does not get out of hand in terms of **quantity** or lead to **debt**. Many people have gotten into a lot of trouble because, similar to a real addiction, they just could not stop buying.

Ultimately, there has to be enough **space** to store these treasures where the collector lives. As a rule, establishing a museum is not possible and is usually not economically viable.

In summarising all these aspects, it can be said that collecting is a natural thing that can be done in a variety of ways and is, in itself, a positive and harmless affair. However, if the passion for collecting gets out of hand and becomes a problem for the collectors and those around them, the line is quickly crossed into a pathological illness or at least an impairment. It is therefore advisable that the social environment of the collectors, if at all possible, monitors the situation and possibly intervenes if an undesirable development should occur or seems apparent.



Abb 10

## **Chapter 7.**

### **Herbert's Journey to Sri Lanka to Pick up a Green Drum Dial.**

I really wanted this light green Drum Dial that a collector friend had offered to me online. He was just very worried about sending it because the post office in his country wasn't too sensitive about goods. So I quickly decided to combine this with a vacation in his country and flew to exotic Sri Lanka back in 1981.

As soon as you get off the plane and arrive on the runway via the gangway, you are overwhelmed by the humid climate of this beautiful fairyland called Ceylon. Mystic and exotic like India, Sri Lanka, which is how it was named in 1972 (before that its name used to be Ceylon), is reminiscent of a drop, located on the south coast of India. It is only about five degrees of latitude away from the equator. In practical terms, this means that the seasons are not at all comparable to Europe. There are only monsoon seasons that bring a lot of rain and non-monsoon seasons during which there are droughts, even though these are moist and humid.



“Rain” during monsoon season means, that the rain pours down from the sky like rivers, flooding everything without being ready for it.

Image 11

Due to the sewage systems in towns and villages being broken most of the time and neither receiving maintenance nor repairs, ever since the British installed them, they can't collect or hold large quantities of water. This results in pedestrians often having to wade through knee-deep water in order to cross any regular road. A region without any seasons means that you get to experience something fundamentally different to what the average Central European is used to. We grew up with the temperatures as well as the brightness of the day changing constantly. In summer it gets light early, and it gets dark late and in winter the opposite happens. We require heating, in order to protect ourselves from the cold in our homes and we have known since we were children, that it is necessary to adapt our clothing to the temperature. This experience almost seems to be "God-given" and irrefutable; ask yourself if you have ever wondered, whether this could be different, before you went to such countries. Of course you kind of know it and so do I. I've known it since Geography class in school. But experiencing it is an entirely different story.

So I came to Asia to realise my dream of getting a colour that was missing from my Drum Dial telephone collection and at the same time this trip turned into an unexpected all-round adventure. I wondered about everything there. All of a sudden you are staying in Asia and wonder why the pavements get "folded up" at 6 pm in the evening (provided there are any!). You wonder, why it gets light at 6 am and dark at 6 pm all year round, without any noticeable change or shift in the course of the year!

It was a cultural shock for me.

It was Winter and I spent the night of Christmas Eve in a hotel pool right by the Indian ocean shore. It was about 30 degrees and in the background, you could hear the song “Holy Night” in German. I have to say I truly felt as if I was in a film and a wrong one at that. The temperature is essentially always the same, always around 30 degrees Celsius, all year long. A Central European is not made for such conditions, even if they believe so at first or long for it in their dreams. I, for one, found out that this experience made me appreciate the different seasons. I enjoy them because they correspond with my nature. Of course we don't like the cold and wet days in autumn and winter at first, but as soon as we have experienced the opposite, even once in our lives, we start to think and feel differently. However, that is something that everyone has to experience for themselves. I'm certain that there are people who deal well with it and therefore love it.



## The First Cultural Shock.

Heat and humidity take hold of the newcomers as soon as the doors of the airplane are opened and at first you have a hard time imagining how you are supposed to endure that for the entire duration of your time there. The airport is considered quite modern and was internationally designed in the 1980s. After your first step out of the airport, you are once again stoked at the dimensions. Hundreds of people are waiting in front of the building, curiously watching the newcomers, anticipating business connections or other contacts. Taxi drivers in particular are waiting right here for new customers. Even if they only have „tuk tuks“<sup>5</sup> to offer or sometimes donkey carriages to take tourists to their destinations.

As I mostly travel privately and not on package deals, there was no tourist bus ready to pick me up. As an experienced traveller, I organised my own personal driver, one of the ones waiting patiently for customers. I quickly walked past all those people that were waiting or watching, but not without having my light-coloured skin touched as I brushed past them, as some considered it “God-like”. It was apparently a new sight for many Ceylonese people and lead to some joyful reactions.

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<sup>5</sup> A car rickshaw is a motorised version of a Rikscha, which has its origins in Japan. These are small vehicles with two or three wheels that are either pulled by a person on foot or on a bicycle (cycle rickshaw) and are used for transporting goods or persons. Due to the noise that the two-stroke engine typically makes, there are sometimes called tuk tuk.

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Internet quote: URL. <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autorikscha.html>.

Status: Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Translated from German by Angelika Hinchcliffe. UK and edited by Anja Kadir, Elmshorn, Germany and the author himself.

Us Europeans (as well as other people) love to tan our mostly pale skin in summer by means of sunbathing (and perhaps even the use of tanning beds). We do that in order to reach a more desirable “tanned” colour, which suggests that we may also participate in the nimbus of a fit, modern human, but sadly only for a short period of time. It seems as though the behaviour of the locals is the exact opposite. The lighter the skin is and the more blond your hair is, the more desirable you are. Quite a few locals dye their hair blonde or a different light colour in order to conform to this concept. I found this strange twisting of these ideal images to be quite bizarre. Even though it shows that humans tend to never be satisfied with what we are and what we have. Instead we always look at our neighbour’s “happiness” and try to imitate them. The “hero worship”, given to our species, has always seemed very submissive to me, even though I never felt uncomfortable being touched. Their touch never felt demanding or presumptuous, but shy and full of respect for, what the locals considered “God-like”, ideal images.

I have to say that this “cult of worship” made me feel alienated to a great extent. Especially since I knew about the colonial history of the British, the Dutch and the Portuguese, who had not treated the locals considerately, to say the least. Bizarrely, this is what made it come full circle in my mind. Colonialism was only possible, because lots of Asians traditionally seemed to exhibit a “natural” reverence for Europeans, at least during colonial times, which might have been why the Europeans’ behaviour during those times was tolerated by them.

Of course, this also says something about how this people or rather this ethnic group sees itself. Do they consider themselves equal, do they have feelings of inferiority, wherever those come from? Or are these feelings of inferiority a sort of tradition, or maybe it is just our impression? Is it perhaps a question of politeness and respect towards strangers and has nothing to do with subservience? Should we even generalise these impressions or does it require an empirical investigation? These questions need to be answered by scientists. This experience was very new to me. But I do understand the temptation it holds.

Of course, I'm already distracted from the first moment of my report on this trip because I still hadn't received my new Drum Dial. I had planned to combine the arduous pick-up in the highlands of the country with a few days of vacation and sightseeing. The anticipation of holding the Drum Dial in my very own hands became more and more unbearable by day, something I hadn't expected when I was planning my trip. Until then, I had made plans for further excursions. On my programme for the next few days I had booked a trip to the South of the country. There I had some experiences that seemed unreal. My stay was planned with a Ceylonese middle-class family in order to be able to experience the country and its people from a kind of insider perspective. In the house, which initially appeared relatively inconspicuous from the outside, conditions prevailed similar to European royal palaces, except that this house was a small townhouse.

Being their guest, I was provided with all-round care by their staff. Without ever having to ask for it, my shoes were polished, my suitcase was unpacked, and everything was arranged in a way that made me feel like a king who did the family's bidding. My overnight accommodation was with the youngest son, who was 13 years old. We shared a double bed. This decision seemed the strangest to me, as I was not sure whether this meant that they offered their own son as a present to me (I heard that those things really do happen). On the other hand, it could have also meant, that the parents trusted me a great deal and wanted to show me their respect. I am sure that the parents knew I wouldn't abuse this situation, simply because I was a heterosexual man who couldn't do anything with children, let alone boys but how can you be really sure of that? Nowadays we know what kind of things go on in the world, but back then you didn't talk about those things, especially in Sri Lanka. It seemed as though there was no other place to stay in the house.

All these seemingly contradicting experiences were pivotal, and I felt like I was on a volcano. I always felt as if the house of cards inside of me could collapse at any moment. The experiences I had in this country, regardless of their nature, were disconcerting and enticing at the same time. Who wouldn't like to have their own personal staff for only a small price and have them care for you all day, every day? My answer is: yes and no. Culturally it is very strange and tempting all at once. It is precisely this ambivalence that makes this country what it is. It is equally shocking and fascinating. "Heaven and hell" all in

one. A catapult of positive emotions and horror scenarios. Asia at its best.

Over the centuries, many people have succumbed to these experiences in their colonies. They were absorbed by the diversity, the sweet temptations and the worst horrors imaginable. Poverty and misery are just around the corner. It is right next to all the colonial glitz and glamour that I experienced. Huge slums in the towns, hundreds of thousands of people, who have to live in street gutters. There is sickness and death, and it all happens just around the corner.

Back to the behaviour of the locals and the traditional admiration they have for Europeans. It has certainly changed fundamentally after all these years, especially because of the increase in experiences that people have had through mass tourism. Their behaviour towards tourists has apparently always been motivated by the fact that lots of locals thought, that if they had good connections to tourists, they could make it to Europe. Then they could profit from the flowing “milk and honey” and all the money lying on the streets, without having to work too much. This might sound stuck-up, arrogant or racist, but it is not. In the short period of time I stayed over there I got the definite impression during a lot of conversations that this assumption is more or less correct. Even when they come to Europe and make their own experiences there, even as tourists, this does not alter the basic behaviour and the inner attitude of those locals from Sri Lanka. If anything, it is strengthened. I would cautiously call it “cultural discrepancy”.

To sum it up briefly:

Many locals from Sri Lanka (and probably many other nationalities in Africa and Asia) seem to admire Europe or the “Western world” (we can also see it in the current refugee crisis). They obviously thought that all Europeans were rich. Who else could afford to go on holiday on the white sand beaches of Ceylon, unless they are Croesus? It seemed as though you could find money on the streets in Europe. Even members of the government seemed to offer homes and other benefits to immigrants and refugees. Even if one didn’t realise that you have to work in Europe too and that life is not super easy and convenient for everybody. These well intentioned warnings were immediately dismissed, these people didn’t believe they were true. It just couldn’t be!

Those people who originally came from near the equator could not imagine the cold, bad weather. Just like I couldn’t imagine what it would be like to live near the equator, before I (like I described earlier) experienced it first-hand. It makes sense that anyone who was unemployed and didn’t have a lot of money (there were and are lots of people) tried with all their might to get to the place where they imagined flowing milk and honey.

I have to admit, I would want and do the same. Now I suddenly thought about what my fellow Sinhalese collector would ultimately charge for the green Drum Dial because we hadn’t really talked specifically about the price. For me, the focus was on the apparatus and the

fact that I had gotten this unique opportunity. My anticipation and excitement continued to increase steadily.



## A Trip to the Highlands in the Direction of the Drum Dial.

Image 12



As soon as you enter the country from the airport, you have to know that even in our view, short distances lead to unusually long travel times. For example, 20 KM from the

airport to Negombo takes one hour, sometimes even one and a half. Bad roads, no feeder roads or motorways, lots of traffic from all directions, such as donkey carts, pedestrians walking in all directions, cows on the road, tuk-tuks, motorbikes, bicycles, etc. blocked the streets in such a way that you could only drive at walking speed. Apart from the horrible stench of terrible exhaust fumes, whirled up dirt and dust, constant honking, and so on, this journey made you feel like you were on a psychedelic trip. If you agree to such a horrible drive, you suddenly become part of this madness and you think it is intoxicating. The impressions of this first trip, no matter its destination, leave newcomers wanting for more. They dive into a wonderful adventure world of different sensations. After a half hour ride the European tourist is so exhausted by all these impressions, smells, acoustic waterfalls and chaotic streets that they arrive at their destination tired when the only thing left to do, after a long

flight and a crazy trip to their personal destination, is to sink into their mattress completely worn out and in desperate need for sleep.

Image 13



When you arrive here in the jungle of Sri Lanka, even though it is still quite close to the coast, you first have to acclimatise to the area for a few days. It is best to do this near a beach. It helps to go for a swim in the Indian Ocean, which has a temperature of over 30 degrees. Even when it rains it feels warmer in the water than outside. A sunrise or sunset on the beach is more relaxing than anything else. They are often very colourful and put you in a kind of trance, as you sit on the beach and all there is left to do is marvel. Within the first few days of my stay it was particularly nice being approached by (local) peddlers on the beach, who had all sorts of (mostly use-

less) stuff to offer. However, it was still better than children offering their bodies, which unfortunately, happens very often in these countries. It doesn't happen as obviously, sometimes you don't realise it right away. But if you listen (and look) closely, the behaviour of some children and teenagers is very obvious. Of course they have experience with this and go about it with extreme caution and reservation. They naturally exhibit "helpful" signals, which often leads to something that should never happen. You could observe that adult males, seemingly from Europe, went on walks with little boys and girls.

As soon as you, as a European, have managed to acquire a tan, which happens in only a few days, as the skin tans (often also reddens) fairly quickly, people will stop approaching you. That is when the locals realise that this tourist has familiarised themselves and can't be approached as easily, or is no longer willing to buy useless products. At one point I spent my whole day lying under a beach umbrella on the beach that was near my hotel and reading my book. The sky was cloudy all day long and no one would have seen any danger in this behaviour, which would have been deemed cautious by Europeans. The rays of the sun are felt so intensely near the equator, that sitting in the shade of a beach umbrella won't change anything about the fact that you will fall prey to a relentless sunburn after only a few hours, sometimes even just half an hour. This is what happened to me, and it took more than a week for the incredible resulting pain to subside.

When it comes to „Beach People“, you have to imagine the following:

In the 1980s a local who “had made it” and worked in a hotel as a waiter or room service assistant earned about 30 Euros per day (converted). That was about the same as the cost of one night in a privately booked hotel room, as opposed to package deals. An unskilled worker who worked at a construction site, for example, would have only earned 0.25 Euros per day. Now it is a bit easier to understand why tourists are seen as a sort of “victim”, who can help you fill your pockets with plenty of money in a matter of minutes. 'Does it still make sense to work on construction sites?', many might ask.

Image 14



Another example is a teenager who sells their body for 20 Euros. After going through this experience once they will never go back to their regular work. It is a lot more lucrative to serve tourists. This is a crux in tourism all around the world. In many cases, tourism destroys social and societal constructs and leads to locals depending on visitors to an extreme degree and in every area. At the same time tourism yields lots of money, at

least in official, legal sectors and can lead to prosperity and even wealth.

That is if we ignore the illegal “black market of sex tourism” and similar dubious businesses like the sale and enslavement of children. This dependence of countries like Sri Lanka and many others like it, which are also reliant on tourism as their only source of income results in a strong social and economic imbalance. As soon as there is a crisis of any kind, which causes the tourism to die down, i.e. civil war, conflicts or a pandemic, the fatal consequences of this one-sided dependence come to the forefront.

After a few days of acclimatising physically as well as psychologically, it is time to take small trips and excursions to the heartland or the beautiful coastlines. The beaches on the South Coast are very interesting. It is easy to get there by train, which takes its route right along the West Coast, providing a fantastic view of the ocean.

Image 15



In this area you can live right under the palm trees at the beach in cabanas<sup>6</sup>. It is such a unique beach by the South Sea and is most often empty,

<sup>6</sup> The word “cabana”, has Spanish roots and can be translated with hut or little house. Sometimes the expression is used for changing rooms on beach sites or at hotel pools.

leaving you to marvel as you please.

In the surroundings of the cabanas you can usually see hard working helpers (cabana boys) whose job it is to keep the beach nice and tidy by sweeping the sand, serving drinks and preparing meals, often all day long right on the open fire.

Image 16



The employees often live there as well, which just means that they camp in a hammock or underneath a table somewhere in the area. This way they also fulfil the role of security guard, watching everything on the property 24/7. Once you've experienced this, you will never forget the feeling of bliss and harmony, provided that you're not feeling sheepish about having succumbed to the genuine temptations of the tropics.

## Arrival at the Highlands. Kandy.

Image 17



The taxi is hot. My drive through the highlands of this wonderful country has its challenges. The roads are tricky, it is humid, and the traffic is dreadful. Oxcarts, bicycles, animals of all kinds, lots of people, and motor vehicles

of all sorts clog up the hot country roads on the way to the highlands and turn our trip into the ultimate adventure. I feel as though I am on a fantasy journey. Every kilometre that we cover in our 30 year old Morris seems so strange, I feel carried away. The car lacks tread on the tires and the petrol can is located by the feet of the passenger seat. A small hose leads to the engine compartment and feeds the ancient motor with the expensive liquid. Every two seconds someone honks their horn; it would be impossible to navigate the road network of this country without a horn. After several hours of this madness we finally arrive at our destination Kandy, located in the highlands of Sri Lanka. A town that is at a high altitude, but it still feels as warm as the lower parts of the island. If you go up a bit higher into the mountains it can get quite cold at night.

Kandy (in Sinhala<sup>7</sup>: Maha Nuvara = big city) is an old Sinhala royal city. It was conquered by the British in 1815, after a long struggle and from then on it was modernised by the British. In 1867 it was connected to the railway line from Colombo. In the centre of the town, there is a large “tank”, the „Kandy Lake“. These tanks consist of water reservoirs that the British constructed. In German, you would call them “artificial lakes”. The tanks have a rectangular or square shape. Next to the tank, there is a large, significant tooth temple called Sri Dalada Maligawa. Legend has it, that it houses one of Buddha’s teeth. This is the reason why lots of Buddhist pilgrims travel to this temple once a year. They come to town to celebrate this treasure with colourful and loud processions.

A visit to a famous fruit market was also part of my plan because my collector friend had proposed this place as our meeting point. My taxi driver described the market as an extremely interesting sight, which was almost too much to handle after such an exhausting journey through the dream world of Sri Lanka.

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<sup>7</sup> Also called *Sinhalese* or *Singhalese*.



**Image 18 by Google Earth. 2020.**  
In the centre of the picture you can make out the atrium's areal of the fruit market.

A German taxi passenger had joined us on the way to Kandy but at the market site he stayed in the car. He was quite young and only cared about “interesting things for young people”. Fruit and meat markets clearly did not fit the bill. Defiant and convinced that he would not miss out in the slightest, he put on his Walkman and leaned back on the old, tattered grey plastic seats of our car. Then he dreamed of our destination for the day, a pool and... he had already fallen asleep.



Image 19 by Google Earth. 2020. **Main entrance of the fruit market.**

The fruit market is more of an inner-city meeting spot in this old royal mountain town Kandy, than what it actually should be. Everything in Kandy is influenced, built or organised by the British in some way. They were the last colonial power of Ceylon. It is possible to still recognise the European structures of this market in all their glory. Asians would have probably not built atrium-style stone houses, in order to sell spices, fruit and meat there. They put sheds by the roadside, built stands out of boards using an ancient cloth as protection from the sun. But they wouldn't build stone houses with roofs! At least such platitudes kept haunting my clueless thoughts.

I can still recognise the splendour of yesteryear, which has long since made way for an unbelievable patina. A patina that we don't even come close to seeing anywhere in Europe. The plaster on the walls is probably one hundred years old. If not, it would still look the same, since the moist tropical air treats everything the same, no matter how recently it was built or how old it might be.



Image 20

The colours on the walls were never updated or painted again. The roofs have become rotten, and they are leaking, so that the monsoon rain flows through every crack of every market stand and covers everything that is not protected by some dirty plastic tarpaulin or coconut leaves.

Hundreds of people are pushing their way through the atrium area whilst lamenting loudly. They hurry from one stand to the next, haggling, trading, shouting, crying or laughing.

My ears are full of a Babylonian jumble of languages, including Sinhalese, Tamils, Arabs, Europeans and a few Americans, mixed in with the voices of small travel groups, which alternate between making excited and shocked sounds. It all depends on the variety of colours and shapes of the fruit or the state of the market.

Groups of flies surround every piece of meat. Meat, that is dangling down from poles or hooks on dirty ancient roof gables and waiting to be put in the wood- or coal-fired cooking pot of a large family soon enough. I make a stop at the stand with bananas in all kinds of colours and sizes. These tropical fruits are shining brightly from a glittering hook, waiting to be bought by the mother of a large family and maybe getting eaten by dozens of hungry mouths.

## **Chootie, my Fellow Collector.**

The centre of the atrium is just grass.

A huge pile of rubbish has been dumped there. The shopkeepers use this patch of grass for one reason only: as a waste area. Nobody cares about what it looks like. The beauty of the ancient Asian culture vanishes in the dirt and the industrial waste of this “threshold nation”-society (the politically incorrect term used to be: Third World). Rats run through the scenery, as if it was the most ordinary thing in the world. Crows release deafening screeches and attack anything that looks edible. It is like falling into a trance, when you surrender to this setting; a trance within a dream world of smells, sounds and heat, combined with breath-taking beauty and dizzying ugliness, paired with ancient rituals and seasoned with modern accessories.

In the midst of this apocalypse of the “Thousand and One Nights”, a local comes running towards me, calling my name, in the midst of this gathering of people, looking for me. My collector friend had written to me that he would like to meet me at this market after I told him about my plans to take a look at this gem of a site. Back in Germany I never dreamed that there would be so many people at the market. But the locals here know how to help each other and what we would think was impossible, they just do with nonchalance and coolness.

I wave and call him over. As he approaches, I held my breath! He had the green Drum Dial in his hand, without

any protection or packaging, and was waving his whole hand to show me that he had the good thing with him! It hit me like a blow. Something made me freeze and I was captivated, so to speak, without me knowing what was happening to me. Before I could stop to think, I had pulled out of the crowd and was heading towards the graceful device in the middle of this chaos. This moment becomes the centre of my thinking and, above all, my feelings. Time seems to stand still. It is the moment of karma that takes hold of you, you don't know it and yet you know it, now the moment has come when everything in your life changes, when things are decided. I feel like I'm seeing a big nugget of gold. It is the moment of "kismet", of fate, of destiny that is calling me here. It calls, no, whispers softly; it attracts me like a magnet that is stronger than anything else in my life.

Yes, there you are, you device of my dreams. Is it just a device? A telephone? I know it's much more than that, it's already my first moment of happiness in a long time.

## Royal Botanical Garden

Our next destination is another relic of the British colonial period; a beautifully designed tropical park, covering 80 hectares. It is called "Royal Botanical Garden" Peradeniya.



Image 21

This park is hundreds of years old<sup>8</sup> and showcases bamboo forests as tall as houses, some trees as large and extensive as an entire forest. A colourful display of exotic flowers makes us forget that we are still in the centre of this Asian chaos. The park gives the impression as if time stood still, as if the English governor was still in charge. This oasis is perfect for taking a break from stressful everyday life in a modern Asian industrial society. On the meadows you can see thousands of Sinhalese and Tamils with large groups of children, sitting or lying and eating their packed meals, mostly rice and curry, a national dish with rice as the base and lots of small side dishes like fish, meat and vegetables. They have proudly wrapped them in newspaper sheets and are now eating them together with the others. With kid and caboodle, generations of locals participate in this social game. Everyone eats using their hands and in a way that seems to us Europeans like a relic left over from a distant past.

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<sup>8</sup> See Internet quoting: URL

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal\\_Botanical\\_Gardens,\\_Peradeniya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Botanical_Gardens,_Peradeniya).

Wikipedia: Keyword „Royal botanical garden Peradeniya“, Status: Oct 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The fingers on the right, clean hand are used to dig into the food like a shovel, turn it slightly and pick up a considerable amount of the spicy dish. Then the thumb, being used as a spoon-fork-knife-hybrid, enters the mouth in a way that allows the steaming delicacy to quickly disappear in the mouth. Soon after the hand returns to the mixture of rice and various other ingredients, all which are seasoned with lots of spices. Us Europeans would think we will never be able to taste anything else again. In this hundredfold ceremony, which seems like a simultaneous interconnection of up and down movements of the hands, like a symphony of arms and mouths, in front of this natural backdrop, which is the garden, you can hear people laughing, see them gesturing and talking. It is a delight to just observe. Large school groups gathered together in the shade of a tropical tree to eat lunch. Despite the shade, we have to endure a heavy heat and humidity. The air causes us to be lethargic and apathetic...

Even the nearby broad river Mahaweli that bubbles through the garden fails to provide the desired air circulation, that we expected from a river such as this one. A risky wooden suspension bridge spans the river, hanging freely. To the horror of someone like me with a fear of heights, you could see the bridge swinging back and forth. Here and there it offers a good view of the bottom of the river, which continues to move untamed and foaming. The countless wooden planks of the bridge are either broken or missing entirely. Crossing this bridge becomes an adventure in itself, just like everything else here in Asia.

Because I practically have the dream of my dreams in my hands, I bought paper and a cardboard box from a stall at the market in Kandy and packed the device up as neatly as I could under these exotic circumstances. Now I am carrying the box so that I can carry it in one hand like a bag with the help of a net of cords. Inside I'm incredibly nervous because I keep thinking that I might mess something up somewhere and that the Drum Dial might break. It would be unthinkable if that happened! So I smartly decide to take a different route, past a trellis of palm trees as tall as houses lining the left and right of the road. I have to wait a little longer until I can safely get back to my accommodation so that I can store the Drum Dial there, because first I want to continue exploring the park to appreciate its beauty, enjoy its shade and enjoy the fact that the ancient park landscape is still looked after as if the English who once created it were still there.

My taxi, in which several tourists now share my route, stops by the roadside during a trip, because there are several "bakery shacks" that lure us in with tasty snacks. Two women go first, while we wait in the taxi, waiting for their expertise concerning the bakery's quality. They decide to buy some of the "baked goods" that look very tempting in the display window. You have to put aside any concerns about the numerous flies that are always surrounding the open displays which aim to lure travellers in from the side of the road. Both of the women come back to the car smiling and hand us several delicious looking rolls and curly-shaped cakes. Suddenly, one of the ladies, named Tanja, screams loudly. „There are maggots in this!“, she yells hysterically and shows us the

curly-shaped roll that had something inside that was moving, it looked like maggots. Without having the chance to take a closer look at this Corpus Delicti, to make sure that this hysterically expressed information is actually true, Tanja throws the pastry out the window pulling a disgusted face. Immediately everyone follows suit, we are all disgusted, panicked, and appalled. To this day, no one knows if anything in these baked goods really was still alive, but as the name suggests something that was “baked” can’t contain anything living.

## **Bureaucracy.**

When I asked about export regulations, locals recommended that I obtain a permit for the export of telecommunications equipment from the "Department of the Ministry of Export" in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. This seemed to be an important and necessary step, because if you did something that was forbidden, you could end up in a dungeon of a prison in Colombo. Although I was not sure whether this was really necessary and since no one could tell me more about it, I drove to the capital in my taxi in the blazing heat and completed my project with great effort. On that day I was sent from "Pontius to Pilate", until I finally reached the correct authority. I then received a meaningless piece of paper written in the Sinhala language and I could only trust that it was the document I was looking for. I asked for directions on every street, until I finally found the right place<sup>9</sup>, as there weren't any road maps I could have bought; if you ask 20 people, you will receive 20 different route descriptions! However, people are not trying to be rude, the locals often do not even know where specific offices are in the city they live in. But since they do not want to seem clueless in front of a foreigner, they try everything they can to help, often using "hands and feet". In most cases, this leads to unavoidable confusion. So it happened that one office sent me to a different office and so on. All in all, it took me two days to obtain the correct document. Later I discovered a possible reason for this inconvenience: Sacrificing a handful of rupees would have ope-

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<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, there weren't any navigation devices available yet.

ned doors and gates for me and since I was naive and didn't pay them anything, everything took longer. Looking back, however, I am proud that I did not bribe anybody; it is still possible to do without in Asia. It only takes will power and lots of time and sacrifice. I just had to assert myself, however, had I been unable to speak English it would have been an impossible undertaking.

I had never before and nowhere else experienced such a blazing heat, reminiscent of a witch's cauldron, there was nothing comparable to this Asian metropolis. The fumes coming from the cars felt as if they were coming from an open fire emitting dark smoke. I was passing through the city on a rented motorbike. This turned out to be a terrible challenge. Within a few minutes, I was covered from head to toe with dust from the streets. I held my breath due to the terrible exhaust fumes from the men (and women??) in front of me. I almost suffocated in the stop and go traffic of this crazy city. Later I parked the motorbike and walked along a main road. The incredible heat was so strong on that day (actually it was like this every day), that I felt as though I was walking through a hot stone oven. My skin was burning, my breathing had stopped, it was simply unbearable. Never before and never again after that did I have such an extreme experience.

## Visiting the Zoo.

A few days later I visited Colombo's zoo. This zoo has not only plenty of rare animals, but it was also especially interesting when it came to "studying" the locals in this country.

Image 22



Lots of children, entire school classes, and other large crowds came to the zoo to admire the large variety of animals in Sri Lanka in person. This kind of trip to the zoo was not just any trip. No, it was an event that you would only participate in once or twice a year. In order to celebrate this special day, the people of Sri Lanka put on their best costumes, the finest and most colourful clothes; often you could see the boys wearing symbols, that are also very special on their own: Western clothing like jeans or nylon shirts with corresponding well-known brand logos. People don't come to visit the zoo for one or two hours only, they will spend the entire day there, taking the time for an extensive picnic or rice and curry meal, wrapped in sheets of newspaper, brought along to the trip and eaten on top of the first patch of grass they can find. Sometimes they share some with the animals.

However, some of the animal cages are less comfortable than that. Lions are left in very small kennels, in which

they walk back and forth, as this is the only movement they are able to do (described as hospitalism<sup>10</sup>). Monkeys are also not allowed to sit on rocks in open-air enclosures, as you would see in European zoos; they too, spend their existence in small individual cages. It is a shame that the awareness that has long since been prevalent in European zoos, has not reached Sri Lanka yet. Namely that zoos should no longer be like prisons. In this way visiting the zoo is an interesting experience for us, because we watch the behaviour of the other visitors. The diversity, grace, happiness, and hunger for knowledge of these wonderful people is unique and contagious. However, the animals and the situation they are in is very unfortunate. This incident surprised me greatly. Usually, followers of Buddhism have great respect for all creatures. Especially due to the Buddhist belief, that one could be reincarnated as an animal, either in one's previous or next life. As it is the case with many religions in the world, belief and reality are often far from the same. It was one of the many contradictions that I noticed again and again in particular. This got me thinking and made me shiver.

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<sup>10</sup> "**Hospitalism** (or *anaclitic depression* in its sublethal form) was a pediatric diagnosis used in the 1930s to describe infants who wasted away while in hospital. The symptoms could include retarded physical development, and disruption of perceptual-motor skills and language. It is now understood that this wasting disease was mostly caused by a lack of social contact between the infant and its caregivers." Internet quoting: URL. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospitalism>. Status: Nov., 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

## Sigiriya.



Image 23

Sigiriya (which means lion's rock) is a small and very old settlement, surrounded by a water ditch and situated around a unique and unusual rock.

The monolithic rock looks as if it was planted by a giant in the middle of the jungle plain. It became famous when UNESCO declared it a world heritage site in 1982. Ever since then, thousands of visitors have come to admire it regularly. The area around this “little” gem is adorned with beautifully renovated gardens, remnants of water fountains, pavilions, and former monastery sites<sup>11</sup>.



Image 24

A short distance from the rock there is a fantastic hotel, which carefully blends into the surrounding landscape. The hotel offers a large outdoor swimming pool and small table arrangements on the grounds around it.

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<sup>11</sup> See also source on the Internet: URL. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigiriya.html>. Keyword Sigiriya. Status: Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> 2020.

If you sit there in the evening while having dinner, you get to witness a picturesque view of the rock and its surrounding jungle. It is the most romantic way to dine. It offers a wonderful area of relaxation in the middle of the jungle, and I spent a few days there, in order to recover from the stress of the road traffic. I had used taxis as well as a motorbike for my trips. Riding a motorbike in Sri Lanka is not just an adventure, it is also a lot of work. Driving over old road paths with lots of holes in them is very stressful for your back and your whole body. Bumps, dust, dirt, and loud noises, as well as the unforgettable stressful traffic, create the need for the driver to take a break every half an hour, in order to grant the body some relief. In addition to that, you have to get used to driving on the left-hand side of the road, which usually becomes a habit quite quickly. Right before left also applies when driving on the left-hand side. But you should make sure that the motorbike (and any other vehicle) is fitted with a horn. Without it, you are doomed. Traffic rules are usually only observed in a rudimentary way. Honking plays an important role, in order to let others know: 'Here I come and make sure not to get in my way!'. The person on the other side thinks the same thing, so oftentimes the only thing you can do is hope that the smarter one of the two gives in. Despite these conditions, the traffic runs quite smoothly and seems to regulate itself, similar to a swarm of bees. Of course, there are plenty of severe accidents around there. But there is still a relatively low number in proportion. India takes first place with 150,785 deaths. One thing is for sure, it definitely takes getting used to for

a Central European (and others) and it is still very dangerous in some situations.<sup>12</sup>

If you feel fit enough, you should enjoy this experience. If you have gone for a ride once, you will agree that it is absolutely incredible. It is a rush that you cannot get anywhere else. Apart from the physical strain, it is a great way to get to know the country and its people. Driving through villages and the countryside on motor scooters, I had several stopovers for snacks and drinks. Large groups of people, mostly children, gathered to watch me eat a banana, as if they had never seen white people eat. At first, this made me quite uncomfortable, but I quickly got used to it. Especially because I often had funny little conversations and chats with these curious people, which was good for me. Nevertheless, it was unfamiliar and sometimes scary. Because there were literally hundreds of people standing by the roadside.

Back then I wrote down my memories of a ride on the motorbike, in order to capture the feelings that rose up in me:

***“Despite the wind and only wearing shorts and a t-shirt, the seat of the motorbike is very hot.***

***It felt like driving through a hot oven, I drive on worn out asphalt with a grooved structure that could force a motorbike into the sand and dust on the roadside.***

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<sup>12</sup> The number of road deaths per 100,000 inhabitants amounts to 3,003 deaths in Sri Lanka (official estimate), which ranks 36th in the world, Germany ranks 33rd with 3,206 deaths. Information by Road Safety Report 2018 of the World Health Organisation, valid for 2016. Internet quoting:  
URL: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste\\_der\\_Länder\\_nach\\_Verkehrstoten.html](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_Länder_nach_Verkehrstoten.html).  
Status: Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> 2020.

***Here, in the centre of the Sri Lanka highlands, there is almost no one crossing my path. At most, a few locals are standing by the roadside now and again. They are surprised that brave tourists ride through the countryside.***

***Despite driving on the left-hand side of the road and the sometimes dangerous behaviour of the Sri Lankan people, I am having a lot of fun riding hundreds of kilometres through the jungle landscape, without any traffic lights, traffic jams, or other reasons to stop.***

***Nevertheless, I have to stop every half an hour or else my back and posterior would not be able to stand the strain.***

***Without a horn, my dangerous adventure tour would be an absolute nightmare with no guarantee of making it out unscathed.***

***People, as well as animals, only react to the warning sound of the horn. Not even the sound of the engine would be able to startle a dog that is sleeping in the middle of the road. They often lie in the middle of the country roads leading up North sound asleep.***

***It is only due to the sound of the horn that they wake up and stumble away from the road.***

***They often pull a face that suggests: ,Another one of these annoying human-made vehicles that won't let me take my five-hour nap in peace!'***

***And: ,Another one of these white humans sitting on it!'***

***Shortly after having this thought and the vehicle having left, they went back to the exact same spot on the street in order to continue their well-deserved nap.***

***Out of nowhere, a roadblock appears in the middle of the country road. At first, it is not clear to me what the point of this barrier is.***

***Suddenly I see a small guardhouse on the roadside. Out comes a soldier who seems to realise I am a tourist and not a terrorist after I lift the visor on my helmet. He gives me a wave and tells me to drive on, without checking me.”***

Back then you would often see these checkpoints along the country roads in the North, as I would later find out. They were supposed to stop the delivery of arms from Tamil guerrillas to renegade Tamil strongholds in the North (as part of the fight for an independent Tamil “Elam”). There was a rumour that the guerrillas used tourists as human shields or even abducted them.

Luckily, I never experienced any of this, I was always able to travel the land undisturbed and unchecked.



## **Departure, Flight Back Home and Arrival.**

The day of departure came closer and closer, and I became more and more nervous. I was very worried about whether my small parcel would survive the flight unscathed. Of course, I took precautions and had acquired better packing material plus an extra carry-on suitcase but just the thought that anything could happen during the long trip - I could not find peace of mind. Then, finally, the day of all days arrived.

After a flight with two long layovers, I finally arrived home. During the entire flight back home, I had been shaking inside, even though the device was parked safely next to my seat, and no one could bump into it. I realised it was a strange and stressful mix between fear of irreparable damage and the overwhelming, almost cult-like joy that had gripped my soul. On the flight I had a lot of time and peace to think and slowly I realised that I must be pretty crazy for what I had brought home:

An adventure trip that you can rarely experience and a souvenir that was actually just a piece of plastic with outdated technology in it!

After my return home, an old friend of mine called me to ask how I was. The only thing I could say in return was:

*“The Drum Dial is fine, it’s finally come home!”*



## Chapter 8. Materials.

In terms of material, the Drum Dial was available in two versions.

The first variant, from 1950-1952 as FgTist 261, consisted entirely of Bakelite, apart from the injection-moulded light metal base plate (see the specific description of the material in appendix 3).

The **advantage** of this material is the corresponding weight required for dialling without slipping. The device was therefore stable and had a very solid feel.

The **disadvantage** is that if a break/ multiple breaks occurred it was difficult to repair. The material is of great value to collectors, as it is becoming increasingly rare in Drum Dials, thus making it quite expensive.

The Drum Dials that are still available today on the used goods market are often equipped with different components; for example, previously damaged Bakelite hoods were later replaced by thermoplastic hoods, so that there are hardly any uniform Bakelite devices available today.

These thermoplastic versions, used later, from 1952-1955, as the FgTist 264, had the advantage of requiring less material for the telephone, which resulted in significantly lower costs for the manufacturer. At the same time, thermoplastic parts could now be manufactured in different colours. However,

the thermoplastic material is not entirely unbreakable, although despite having a thinner wall, it is overall more stable than Bakelite, which also tends to become brittle due to the effects of temperature.

In fact, the change in material symbolises the change from the Bakelite era to the all-encompassing plastic era of the 20th century.

## Epilogue.

When it comes to the topic of “old telephones”, which almost no one uses anymore (many people do not even have a landline these days), no one would think that it might make sense to write about this old technology, let alone that anyone even reads these books.

The author made the astonishing discovery that the opposite of these assumptions is true. His two volumes that have been published so far

***“The Drum Dial - The Forgotten Telephone Luminary of the Federal German Founding Years”***  
and

***“The Drum Dial - Volume 2 - Back to the Future - A Chronology of Patents”***

are sold in great numbers to the worldwide fan and collector community of this gem of design and communication history.

Can we now deduce from this that the rapid technological and communication-oriented development of the last few years shows, as a counterpoint, a longing for the tactile and beautiful, perhaps also the desire for deceleration and recollection of a more diffuse kind? Presumably, it reflects something special that stands out from the often boring mainstream of our time and attracts new (perhaps also traditional) attention?

Whatever the motivation for this new hype in an old communication culture, it raises the question, will people, after another 70 years, show the same interest and passion when it comes to smartphones or other amorphous gadgets of our current time?

We don't yet know what will happen next, but we do know one thing for sure:

The Drum Dial “lives” on, especially in the hearts of the many friends of this unique luminary!

## **Annex 1. Notes.**

The actions and all people involved in this collection of reports have been anonymised so that no conclusions can be drawn about people, living or passed. This is done to protect your privacy and right to anonymity. Any resemblance to living and real persons would be purely coincidental and not intentional.

Certain parts of the book were written with the support of artificial intelligence (AI), the corresponding paragraphs are marked with an asterisk at the beginning: “ \* ” and are not subject to copyright. Other text passages are merely inspired by AI.

Source note:

ChatGPT German in full screen / Model X = GPT-3.5 Turbo (chatgptx.de), personal communication, December 2023.

## **Annex 2. Self-Portrait of a Telephone Collector. „Addicted“.**

Many of us will know the feeling of being addicted. Not being able to live without “it”, always going into the basement or the workshop and screwing, inspecting, repairing and restoring or simply looking at what it or they look like. And the fact that it is a device that no longer exists today in this particular shape and colour, with this fine mechanical technology and made of this or that material, does not stop me from always using it, to continue to look at and use it, even if I no longer have a single space left in my apartment, in my house. And for a long time now, our wife, our husband or our girlfriend has had enough of things standing around in every corner of the house that others have long since thrown into the dustbin of history or, in the best case scenario, have simply gotten rid of.

What was deemed the most important accessory in the house only a few years ago is now despised and simply rubbish. Some no longer even have a house telephone or a telephone connection in the house. They only use these shapeless, uniform-looking devices that, admittedly, can do a thousand times more than what filled entire houses just a few decades ago. A friend of mine said some time ago when I asked, *“Where is your phone and your PC?”* *“Phone, PC?, what are you on about?! They are in the basement and will soon be disposed of. I do everything with my mobile phone!”*

My addiction is breathing down my neck like a wild animal. I don't know what to say anymore, I'm speechless and I feel the urge to do something about it today and go into my basement, where my treasures are that no one wants, and no one has anymore. Addiction and living in the basement make me lonely and I have the feeling that I also belong in the basement, where the other objects are, which are locked there to no longer be visible or to be sorted out from there soon. I cannot shake the feeling that I'll be ready soon, too.

A few days ago I visited another member of our guild and saw how he lives: he doesn't live with telephones, but in telephones! What's more, he rented an apartment next door to his large old flat and made a breakthrough; Now he has a huge apartment. He only lives in two small rooms and gives his devices the most space. There are boxes full of invisible things everywhere and every little room is filled with everything that the history of telephones has to offer. I'm shown around and even though I see so much that I've never seen before, I don't see anything. My capacity for taking everything in is limited. Is it my age or just the number of impressions?

At the end of the day I realise that there are other levels of addiction and dependence and I go home feeling like I'm not that crazy, there are far "worse" cases (I smile at that thought!). And at home I talk about it and I still think: *'Now you finally know that*

*I'm not that bad, there are people who are much "worse" than me!*

But then I see the red Drum Dial, it is bright, not to say screaming, red. Many people would probably scream: *'What an ugly thing, how can you put such a colour in your apartment!'* But lately, for me at least, it has become one of the most valuable things.

When, in the evening, I open the package that my friend gave me, I am at peace with myself. The addiction has struck again, finally, after so many years of searching and begging, I finally managed to bring him home, to where his brothers in other colours had been waiting for him for many years:



Image 25, with kind permission from Remco Enthoven, California, USA, see also the title page and p. 43: **Krause, Christoph T.M.**, *The Drum Dial - The Forgotten Telephone Luminary of the Federal German Founding Years*. Tredition Verlag, Hamburg 2020.

Thank you, my dear friend, you made me happy,  
more so than many others.

### **Annex 3. „Bakelite“. A Wikipedia Article.**

[...] The first fully synthetic, industrially produced plastic (...) was manufactured and marketed under the name Bakelite, which was developed in 1905 by the Belgian chemist Leo Hendrik Baekeland and named after him.

The thermoset plastic is a phenoplast [sic!] based on phenol and formaldehyde. Moulded parts made from this plastic are produced by compression moulding and curing a phenolic resin-filler mixture in a heated mould. Later, other plastics were also marketed as Bakelite, such as variants of phenoplasts, aminoplasts, epoxy resins and polyester resins. (...)

Like many other plastics, Bakelite can also contain asbestos, which can be hazardous in handling and requires special disposal. (...)

#### **History**

Baekeland experimented with phenol and formaldehyde at the beginning of the 20th century. He discovered that these substances polymerised into a synthetic resin in an exothermic reaction. After removing the resulting water, the still soft warm mass (pressing compound) can be pressed into moulds and hardened by heat and pressure. A patent was granted for the corresponding process in 1907. (...)

On February 5, 1909, Baekeland presented his discovery in the New York Club of Chemists on 55th Street under the name of Bakelite. (...) Shortly af-

terwards there were reports in Europe about 'an art product with many uses (...) that will at least be as important as celluloid (...). And what is it? An artificially produced resin with particularly excellent properties. It is very hard, harder than shellac and hard rubber, but unfortunately not as elastic as both. However, it has the advantage of being non-combustible and resistant to most acids, such as dilute sulfuric acid. Even in hot water it maintains its resistance up to 300°. (...) If one lets particularly thin Bakelite work on cheap, porous softwood, they will get a wood that is thoroughly impregnated and is not inferior to ebony in terms of hardness and is extremely resistant to diluted acids, water and steam. In a similar way, the inventor succeeded in impregnating cardboard and paper. (...) Whether Bakelite will prove itself in all of these cases cited by the inventor remains to be seen, of course.'

– Article in the *Prager Tagblatt* on April 17, 1909 (...)

Baekeland quickly recognised the new properties of the material and founded Bakelite GmbH in Erkner near Berlin on May 25, 1910, together with RÜTGERS-Werke. (...)

At this time, phenol was still produced in large quantities as a waste product of coal distillation, and Baekeland began to produce Bakelite in large quantities.

After the Second World War, the Bakelite factory in Erkner was dismantled and nationalised. VEB Plasta Erkner was founded there in 1948. The owners moved the company headquarters to Lethmathe near Iserlohn in the Western zone. [...]

## Properties.

After the plastic has cooled and hardened, it is resistant to mechanical influences, heat and acids. In contrast to thermoplastics, Bakelite cannot be deformed again even when heated. However, it is relatively brittle, so objects made of this material can shatter, for example when they hit the ground.

Phenolic resins tend to darken and are therefore usually dark brown or black in colour. (...) The moulding materials also contain additives such as wood flour, rock powder or textile fibres, which can result in coloured marbling.

Bakelite is also very durable. During World War II, the U.S. Navy probably lost a component made of Bakelite marked *VP-101*. It may have floated in the Pacific garbage patch for 60 years before being swallowed by a Laysan albatross. (...)

## Use

After the 'pressure-heat' patent expired in 1927, the production method spread quickly - by the 1930s there were already several hundred pressing plants and manufacturers of phenolic resin moulding compounds in Germany. The driving force here was the 'typification' of the pressing compounds and the pressing products by a manufacturer's association.

Products made from Bakelite include household and kitchen items (handles for windows, doors, pans

and cooking pots, waffle irons), telephones (model W48), ornaments, decorative jewellery, weapons (fittings), office supplies, light switch and socket housings, tracks for model trains made by Trix Express (1935 to 1955), housings for devices, radios and transformers and generally for electrical and thermal insulation material.

These properties made Bakelite ideal for use in motor vehicles (ignition coil and spark plug connectors, distributor caps, insulation of carburettors and fuel pumps against hot engine components). The Trabant's body parts were made of cotton fibre-reinforced phenolic resin.

In coloured form, Bakelite was used, among other things, as a substitute for gemstones, amber and ivory. The Bakelite used instead of ivory was launched on the market under the name 'Ivorine'. (...)

Phenol-formaldehyde resin is still used when mechanical and thermal resilience, low flammability and chemical resistance are required, for example in grinding wheels, friction linings, filter papers, fire-proof materials, insulation materials, machine operating elements and for the impregnation of wood and paper materials (circuit boards). Similar materials are used as heat shields.

Bakelite products are often sought-after collector's items because of their design and their significance for everyday culture and industrial history. Enthu-

siasts claim that Bakelite offers a better grip compared to modern plastics.

Bibliographic information for “Bakelite”.	
Page title:	Bakelite
Publisher:	Wikipedia – The free encyclopaedia
Author(s):	Wikipedia authors, see version history
Date last updated:	November 9, 2023, 13:45 UTC
Version ID of the page:	238954215
Permalink:	<a href="https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bakelit&amp;oldid=238954215">https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bakelit&amp;oldid=238954215</a>
Date accessed:	December 8, 2023, 16:21 UTC
Underlined text:	Is marked blue in the original text to show links. These links have been removed.
In-text footnotes:	Have been omitted and marked as an omission by three superscript dots in parentheses: <sup>(...)</sup> The usual square bracket to indicate external changes has been replaced here by a round bracket, as there are already square brackets in the original text.

## **Annex 4. Plastic as a Telephone Material.**

**An Article Excerpt from a Publication by the Post and Telecommunications Museum Foundation, Frankfurt/Main.**

[...] “The global triumph of plastics injected a colour into everyday life that was previously unknown. At the same time, plastics offered previously unimagined possibilities for dynamic, organic, transparent and light design.’ (...)

The decades-long experiments with plastic led to new forms of everyday products - and to the first coloured telephones. Plastics are either thermoset or thermoplastic materials that are created through polycondensation, polymerisation or polyaddition (i.e. mixing processes and various heat and pressure processes). A wide variety of different types of plastic – casting resins, injection moulding, foam, moulding compounds, chemical fibres, glues and paint resins – could be obtained from this. (...) In the 1950s, phenolic plastics, melamine, acrylic resins, polyesters and silicones initiated enormous changes in the mechanical production of housings, cable cords, finger-hole discs and even small components in telephone construction. (...)

*[Omission of two illustrations and the associated illustration descriptions on the right side on page 153 of the source (see below), author’s note]*

*[Omission of an illustration and the associated description of the illustration on the left side on page 154 of the source (see below), author’s note]*

The improved thermoplastic was characterised above all by its excellent insulating properties and arbitrary formability. However, light resistance and colouring remained at the experimental stage: various test series in rich green and red were launched on the market in addition to black. In such series of tests, the yellowish inherent colour occasionally led to strangely tasteless but fashionable solutions: What was already used in portable radios with wooden housings - because of the excellent sound - with a cover made of beige plastic imitating leather, which was intended to enhance the aesthetics, was now transferred also onto beautifully designed plastic telephones. In this way, it was avoided that the colour would fade in sunlight and at the same time the trend of the time was followed by delivering a product that was 100% washable. (...) Although the thermoplastics were significantly more expensive than the previously used dark phenolic materials (Bakelite), which were processed using a pressing process and hardened through heat, the thermoplastic material could be used for injection moulding processes. The housing walls could be significantly thinner, which meant less raw material and weight and overall proved to be more cost-effective in terms of manufacturing. Thanks to polymer (corresponds to PVC with a type of plasticiser), the easily wearable textile coverings of the telephone lines could now be replaced with moisture-protecting covers. The stretchy coiled telephone cords (spiral cords) were introduced 'both here and there' from 1955 onwards."

Source: **Jörges, Christel**: Black Realities – Colourful Dreams.  
In: Ed. (2001) **Jörges, Christel / Gold, Helmut**. Telephones  
1863-2000. From the Collections of the Museums for Com-  
munication. Edition Braus, Heidelberg, p. 153 f.  
Note: Any grammar and punctuation variants of the original  
text have been retained.

<b>Annex 4.</b>	<b>Photo Credits, Page 1</b>
<b>Image Number</b>	<b>Type + Origin of Image</b>
Cover	<p>“Telephone receiver and power cord as a heart on white wooden background, love hotline concept, 3D illustration” from www.alamy.de, agefotostock/ Alamy Stock Photo.  Alamy ID: RKHHGP  <b>Name for the book:</b>  <b>Cover.</b></p>
Image 1	<p>Courtesy of Remco Enthoven, California, USA, see also the title page and p. 43: <b>Krause, Christoph T.M.</b>, <i>The Drum Dial - The Forgotten Telephone Luminary of the Federal German Founding Years</i>. Tredition Verlag, Hamburg 2020.  <b>Name for the book:</b>  <b>Cherry red Drum Dial.</b></p>
Image 2	<p>Photograph from the author's private archive.  <b>Name for the book:</b>  <b>Drum Dial in black.</b></p>
Image 3	<p>Photograph from the author's private archive.  <b>Name for the book:</b>  <b>Drum Dial in ivory.</b></p>
Image 4	<p>Ibid. Image 1  <b>Name for the book:</b>  <b>Cherry red Drum Dial,</b>  <b>focus on pull number switch.</b></p>

<b>Annex 4.</b>	<b>Photo Credits, Page 2</b>
<b>Image Number</b>	<b>Type + Origin of Image</b>
Image 5	<p>Siemens AG Communications, Thought Leadership &amp; Branding, Siemens Historical Institute CMTLSHI  Approval of the Siemens advertising poster for use in the book:  <i>"Advertising brochure from SIEMENS (1950)".</i>  <b>Name for the book:</b>  <b>Cherry red Drum Dial</b>  <b>(focus on light red Drum Dial).</b></p>
Image 6	<p>Photograph from the author's private archive.  <b>Actress: Angelika Wegerhoff, Köln.</b>  <b>Name for the book: Angelika and her cherry red Drum Dial.</b></p>
Abb. 7	<p>Photograph from the author's private archive.  <b>Name for the book:</b>  <b>Actress: Angelika Wegerhoff, Köln.</b>  <b>Name for the book: Angelika and her cherry red Drum Dial.</b></p>
Image 8	<p>"W48 ivory)  Wikimedia Commons:  File: W48 elfenbein.jpg  Author: Frank Murmann  Date of publication:  October 28, 2007.  Date accessed: December 9, 2023.  Approval by:  GNU Free Domain, version 1.2  Licensed under:  Creative Common Attribution Alike 3.0 unported.  <b>Name for the book:</b>  <b>Telephone W48 ivory.</b></p>

<b>Annex 4.</b>	<b>Photo Credits, Page 3</b>
<b>Image Number</b>	<b>Type + Origin of Image</b>
Image 9	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Drum Dial in reseda green.</b>
Image 10	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Drum Dial in marone red.</b>
Image 11	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Sri Lanka South Coast.</b>
Image 12	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Sri Lanka Bus Station.</b>
Image 13	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Sri Lanka Sunset.</b>
Image 14	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Travelling South by Train.</b>
Image 15	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Catamaran on the Beach.</b>
Image 16	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Catamarans at the harbour.</b>
Image 17	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Taxi.</b>

<b>Annex 4.</b>	<b>Photo Credits, Page 4</b>
<b>Image Number</b>	<b>Type + Origin of Image</b>
Image 18	Google Earth. 2020. Atrium area of the Central Market in Kandy, Sri Lanka. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Kandy Central Market.</b>
Image 19	Google Earth. 2020. Main entrance of the Central Market in Kandy, Sri Lanka. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Central Market Entrance.</b>
Image 20	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Taxi driver with taxi.</b>
Image 21	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Tree in the Royal Botanical Garden in Kandy, Sri Lanka.</b>
Image 22	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Zoo scene in Colombo, Sri Lanka.</b>
Image 23	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>Sigiriya Rock, Sri Lanka.</b>
Image 24	Photograph from the author's private archive. <b>Name for the book:</b> <b>View from hotel onto Sigiriya Rock, Sri Lanka.</b>

<b>Annex 4.</b>	<b>Photo Credits, Page 5</b>
<b>Image Number</b>	<b>Type + Origin of Image</b>
Image 25	<p>Ibid. Image 1.            Courtesy of Remco Enthoven, California, USA, see also the title page and p. 43: <b>Krause, Christoph T.M.</b>, <i>The Drum Dial - The Forgotten Telephone Luminary of the Federal German Founding Years</i>. Tredition Verlag, Hamburg 2020.  <b>Name for the book:</b>  <b>Cherry red Drum Dial.</b></p>