

Bellerophon (Βελλεροφῶν) or **Bellerophon** (Βελλεροφόντης)

Part of our “Early telephony” series.

By Herb Ranharter 6/26/2020

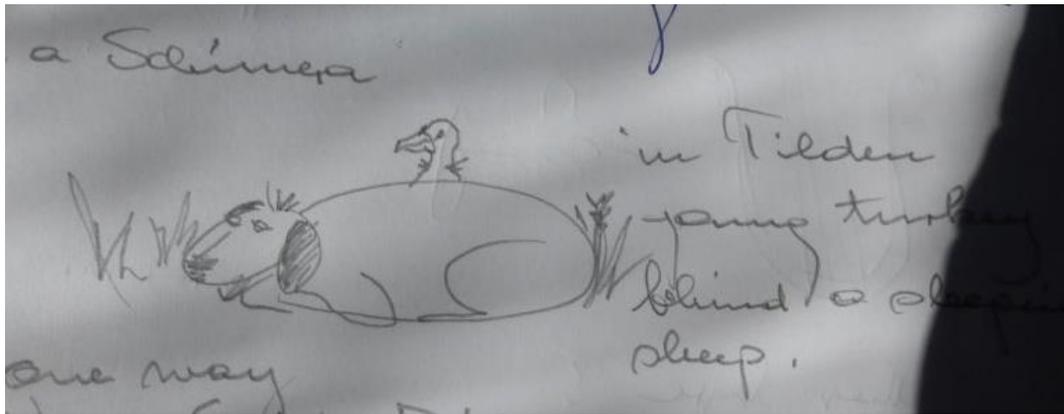
A Bellerophon, that’s what we used after WW2. You had to hand crank it to get the dynamo to charge the capacitors so as to have enough electricity to get a message through the twisted pair connected to the other telephone. More often than not you had to “beller” into it if you wanted to be heard (hence the name Bellerophon) – no such thing as a private conversation. Asthma sufferers where out of luck! By the time they got done hand cranking they were so far out of breath that they couldn’t talk. Once they regained their strength the charge had discharged through its inner leakage and it had to be cranked again. The device itself got its name from the ancient Greeks who had managed to craft a goats head and neck on top of a lion. When squeezing this head hard enough, (much safer to squeeze the goat then the lion) the main body, i.e. the lion, then screamed in agony with a roar that could travel from island to island. This gave rise to an early form of Morse code (in Hamburg generally referred to in the context of evoking a “morse–morse”, as a response expression to a hailing). The Morse code, as we know it today, arose much later in the 19th century, it is quite erroneously attributed to Samuel Finley Breese Morse, (1791 to 1872). He was merely the man who standardized the mutually accepted form of the code thereby making it useful to a broader world-wide use especially when applied through the telegraph machine which he actually invented for use with this code.



The early version of the Bellerophon also gave rise to the early form of the “Frisbee” or “Discus” as the ancient Greeks called it. These small clay disks were actually catapulted between islands and went spinning as they were flung. The could be made to hit their targets with surprising precision waking the Bellerophon on the neighboring island by striking it hard so as to elicit a response-transmission in answer to the originating “beller”. These disks unfortunately shattered on impact. Well, most of them, creating the need for a substantial production of these disks; in fact an over-production of such phenomenal magnitudes that to this day some of these priceless artifacts are still sold as surplus clay pigeons and unknowingly wasted for sport by today’s British gentry.



Substantiating evidence:



Sorry, didn't take photographs.....