

Pre-1960 Electric One Switch Fun: Extras

Early fun and games played with an electric switch



Van de Graaf generator photo via: CriticalEnquiry.org

Electricity. The ultimate discovery – OMD 1980

Since the first humans saw lightning flash across the sky, the power of electricity has both fascinated and frightened us.

Harnessing and better understanding this power took some time. One early step was in playing with amber (fossilised tree resin), known in ancient Greek as “ēlektron” and Latin as “electrum”. Rubbing amber on fur builds up a static charge. Hovering this magical stone across human hair will make it rise towards it. That Amber was long used in mystical medicine practices around the world is of no surprise.

In his book *De Magnete* (1600) English physicist **William Gilbert** documented the first Scientific recognition of static electricity. From his wide range of experiments with amber and magnets our understanding of electricity started to bloom.

Some electrical games however predated any understanding of electricity....

... some games simply relied upon the electricity coursing through our brains and nerve endings. Ancient games with no batteries required to play...



Stare outs. On the count of three, stare at an opponent. First to blink loses.

Photo via: OnlineBicycleMuseum.co.uk

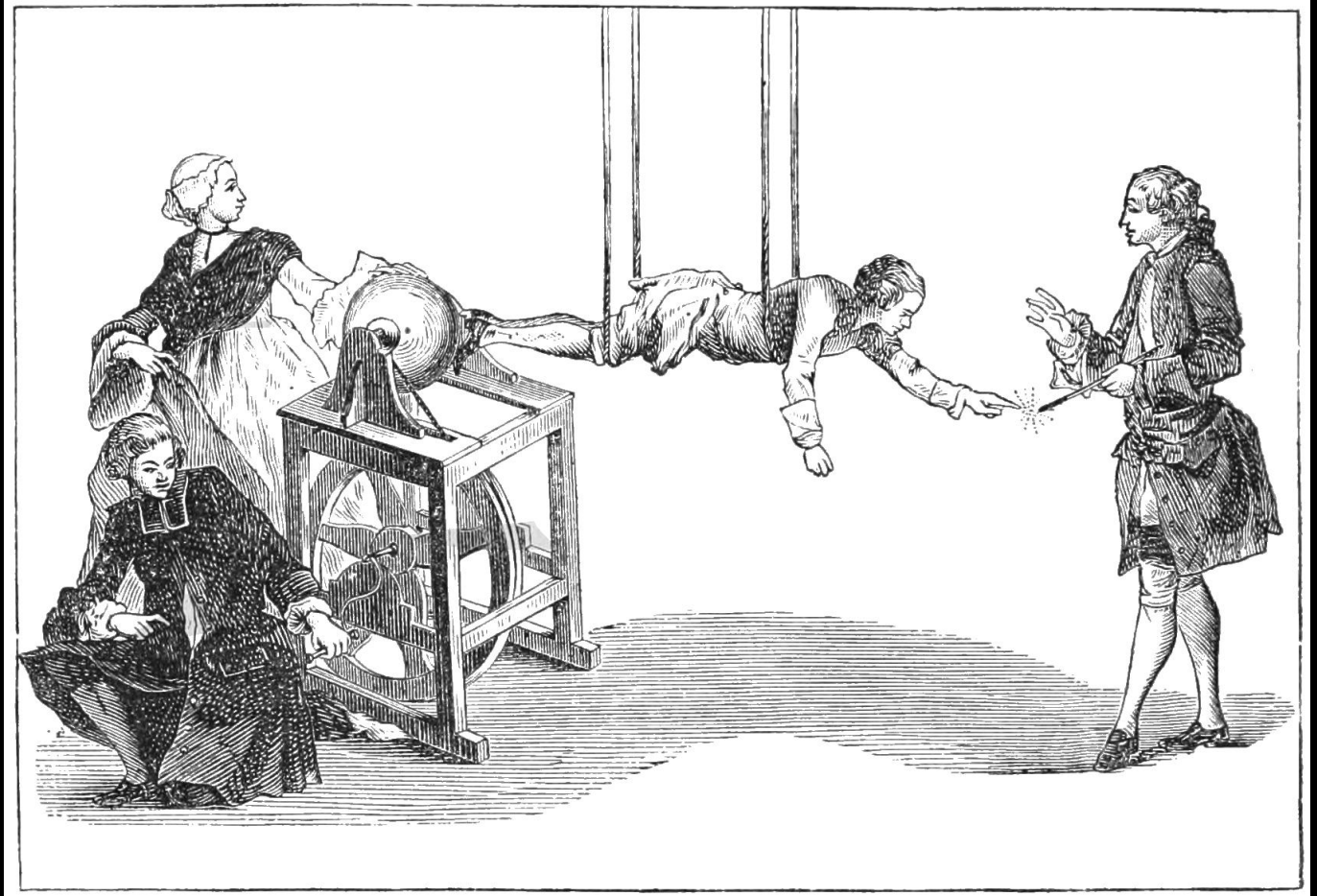


Sleeping lions, the children's party game. All but one must lay perfectly still and silent, if you're spotted making a single sound or a move, you're out! Surely as old as sentient life, with its origins in learning how to play dead to avoid capture or attack.

Photo via: PrincessPartiesuk.com

In 1780 Italian scientist Luigi Galvani discovered that electrical charge could make the legs of a dissected Frog twitch. He deduced that there was a store of electrical energy in the frog's pelvis. Hopes grew that perhaps it would be possible to harness the power of this store, and perhaps to bring the dead back to life.

Fellow Italian Alessandro Volta was first to succeed in creating an electric battery in 1799. Not a battery made of frogs, but of copper, zinc and brine-soaked cloth. As scientists began to better understand how to harness the power of electricity, more electrical games and amusements would begin to appear. Some slightly bonkers:

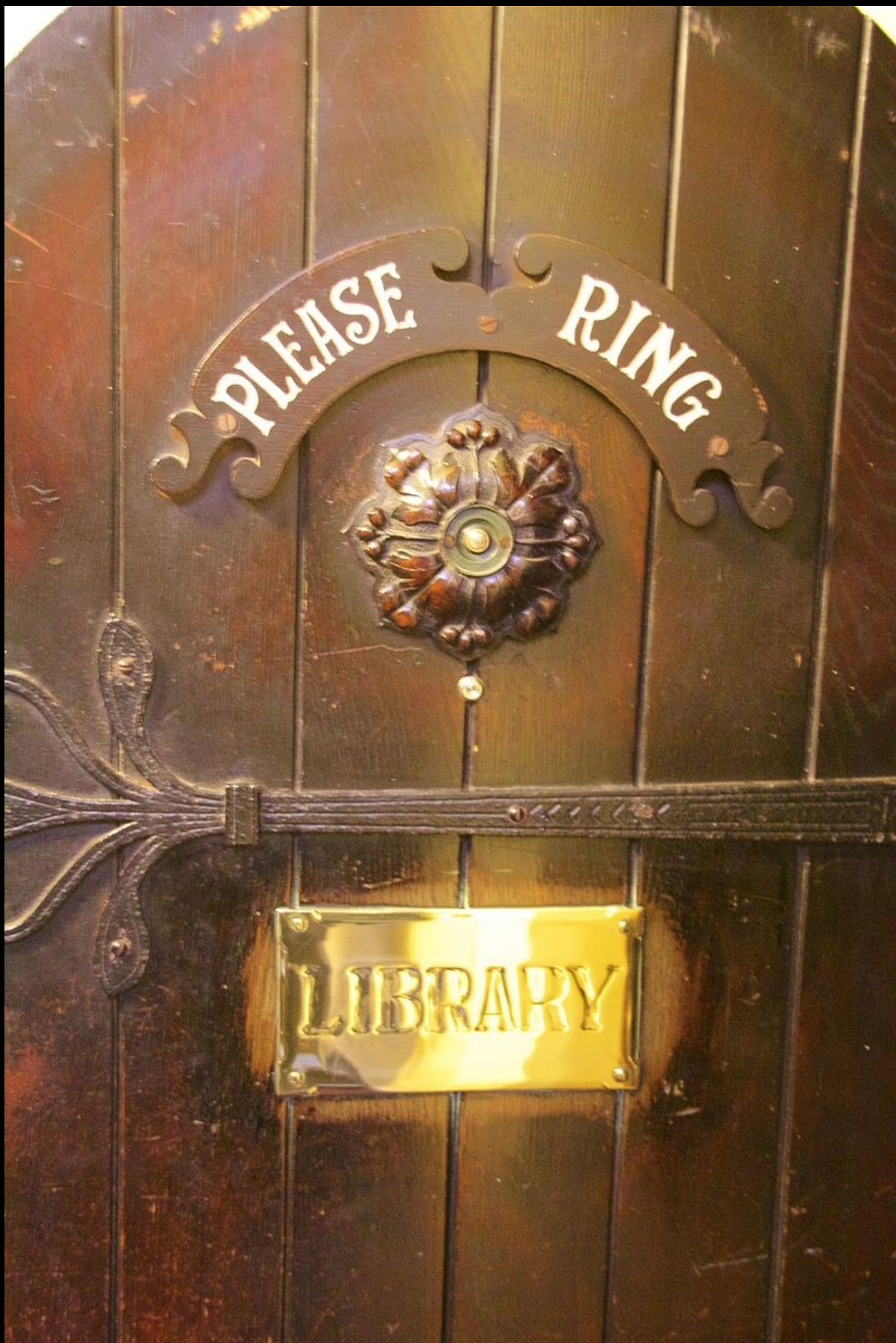


...some horrific, with human corpses, making them twitch into some grotesque parody of life. This led to the creation of Mary Shelly's Frankenstein. It was also part of the path that led to the wonders of modern medical uses of electricity, such as the defibrillator, first demonstrated in Geneva, Switzerland in 1899.



One-switch to live.

Early defibrillator picture via: CommunityHeartbeat.org.uk



Doorbell games of Knock Down Ginger. Press the button for as long as you dare, run away to hide out of sight, watch the confused resident open the door to no one. Do repeatedly to make them mad.

Photo via: MikePeel.net

VATE

wound

\$5.80

50 lbs.

\$3.25

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.45

2.50

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.60

13.80

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It is a

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IRON BOX BELLS.

Used for Door Calls, Alarm Work, Etc.



No. 6090.

No. 6090. With 3 in. gong. Each.....50c

No. 6091. With 4 in. gong. Each.....60c



BUZZERS, WITH METAL BOX.

Buzzers are sometimes used in place of bells, as they make a low buzzing sound No. 6091. which can be heard but a short distance.

No. 6095. Buzzer, with nickel or wood box. Each.....60c

PUSH BUTTONS.

Push Buttons are arranged to make electrical connections and are used for door bells and other work.

No. 6099. Push Buttons, oak. Each.....15c

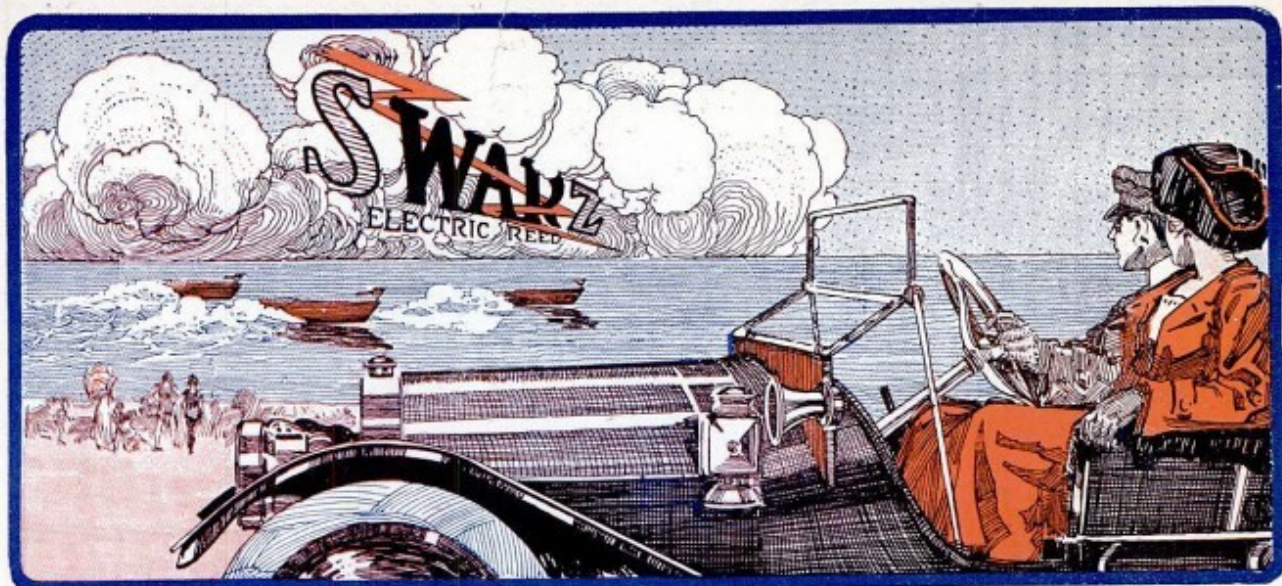
No. 6100. Push Buttons, fancy or polished bronze. Each.....40c

No. 6101. Floor Push for servants' call, etc. Each.....75c



1897: Sears catalogue electric doorbells and buzzers with push-buttons.

Picture via: Electrachime.net



A Practical Electric Signal Device For Automobiles and Motor Boats

Operated by a button convenient to the driver's seat, either foot or hand, responds instantly, giving any desired length of blast.

Insures you against accidents, clears the road, giving you the "Right of Way."

The sound is a deep, rich, mellow, distinctive, warning, neither offensive nor musical, just a business-like warning, "Car Coming," easily heard $\frac{1}{2}$ mile ahead.

Cost of operation is reduced to a minimum; 5 dry cells will last a season with ordinary usage or you can connect it to your storage battery. Consumes less current than any Electric Horn on the market.

Guaranteed to be perfect in material and workmanship.

Prices for Automobiles

SwarZ Electreed Model Z—Complete with highly polished brass horn, hand or foot button (as desired), 10 feet Packard cable, tape, etc., ready to install, . **\$18.00**

SwarZ Electreed Model Y—With heavy metal horn, coated in dark enamel



Model Z



Model Y

Special Offer—Use Coupo

Send Cash or Money Order and we will prepay express charges

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____

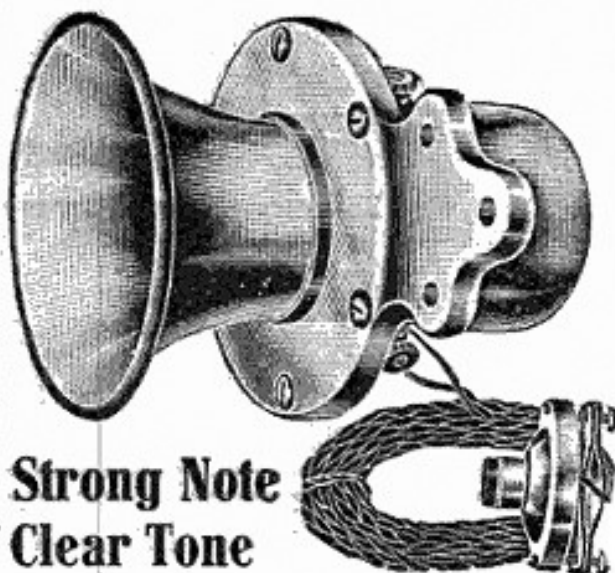
Model Desired _____

MESCO

Electric Signal Horn

**Autos
and
Boats**

**Approved for
Marine Use**



Efficient

Economical

Strong Note

Clear Tone

Warns without offending. Made of heavy cast and wrought brass, highly polished. Price complete with Push Button, 10 ft. Cable and necessary screws for attaching . . . **\$15.00**

Arranged for Motor Boat \$15.50

Manhattan Electrical Supply Co.

NEW YORK . . 17 Park Place

CHICAGO . 186-188 Fifth Ave.

Push-button horns, hooters and klaxons: Make unexpected people (or geese) jump out of their skins with a deliciously timed honk as you drive or sail by. Grin mischievously.

c.1911-1914 Electric Signal Horn with bush button switch.

Picture via: Moebius-bcn.com




1890 **Pacific Phonograph Co** modified music player started with coin-slot. Drop in a coin and listen to the recording.

Automatic Chime Bells. One coin to trigger an electricity powered musical bell symphony. Taken from a **1899 Ogden & Co. catalogue** of automatic slot machines.

OGDEN & CO. CHICAGO, ILL.

Automatic Chime Bells.

Nickel Slot Machine.



CAN BE
OPERATED
WHEREVER
ELECTRIC LIGHTS
ARE USED.
ONE WIRE WILL
FURNISH ENOUGH
POWER TO
OPERATE MACHINE.
BELLS CHIME
TWO MINUTES
FOR EACH
NICKEL PLAYED.

THE GREATEST
MUSICAL MACHINE
EVER MADE.
BUY THE
FIRST AND
REAP A
HARVEST.
AUTHORITIES
CANNOT
INTERFERE.

Tune Sheets, 10 cents each. Per Doz., \$1.00.
Automatic Chime Bells Machine Complete, \$400.



1912 US illuminated watch stand. Guess the time upon waking in the dark, then press to find out if right or not. Not a fun game for insomniacs. Latching on/off switch on top of box. Remote push-button switch to side.

Via: Flashlight Museum

UNCLE SAM WANTS OPERATORS

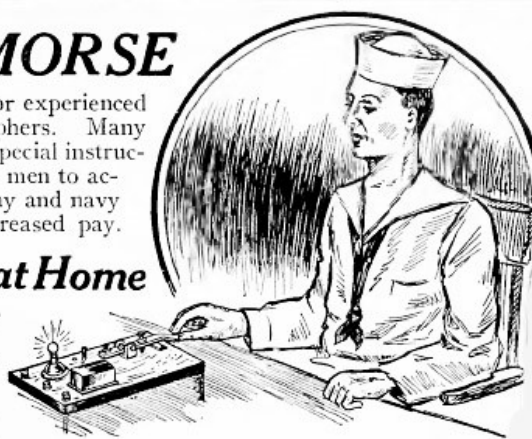
BOTH RADIO AND MORSE

Your Government is calling for experienced wireless operators and telegraphers. Many schools have been opened where special instruction is given qualifying young men to accept such positions in the army and navy with advanced rank and increased pay.

*You Can Learn at Home
in Your Spare Time*



Combination
Wireless-
Telegraphy
OUTFIT



will soon make you an accomplished operator. Teaches Light and Sound Signals, both Radio and Morse. Outfit consists of exceptionally fine Telegraph Key, Buzzer, 3 Binding Posts, Lamp, Lamp Socket and Control Switch—all mounted on a highly finished base. Two outfits can be operated at considerable distance apart for sending and receiving practice.

PRICE OF COMPLETE OUTFIT \$2.50

WITH WIRING DIAGRAM, CHART AND FULL INSTRUCTIONS

Shipped to You Anywhere, All Charges Prepaid

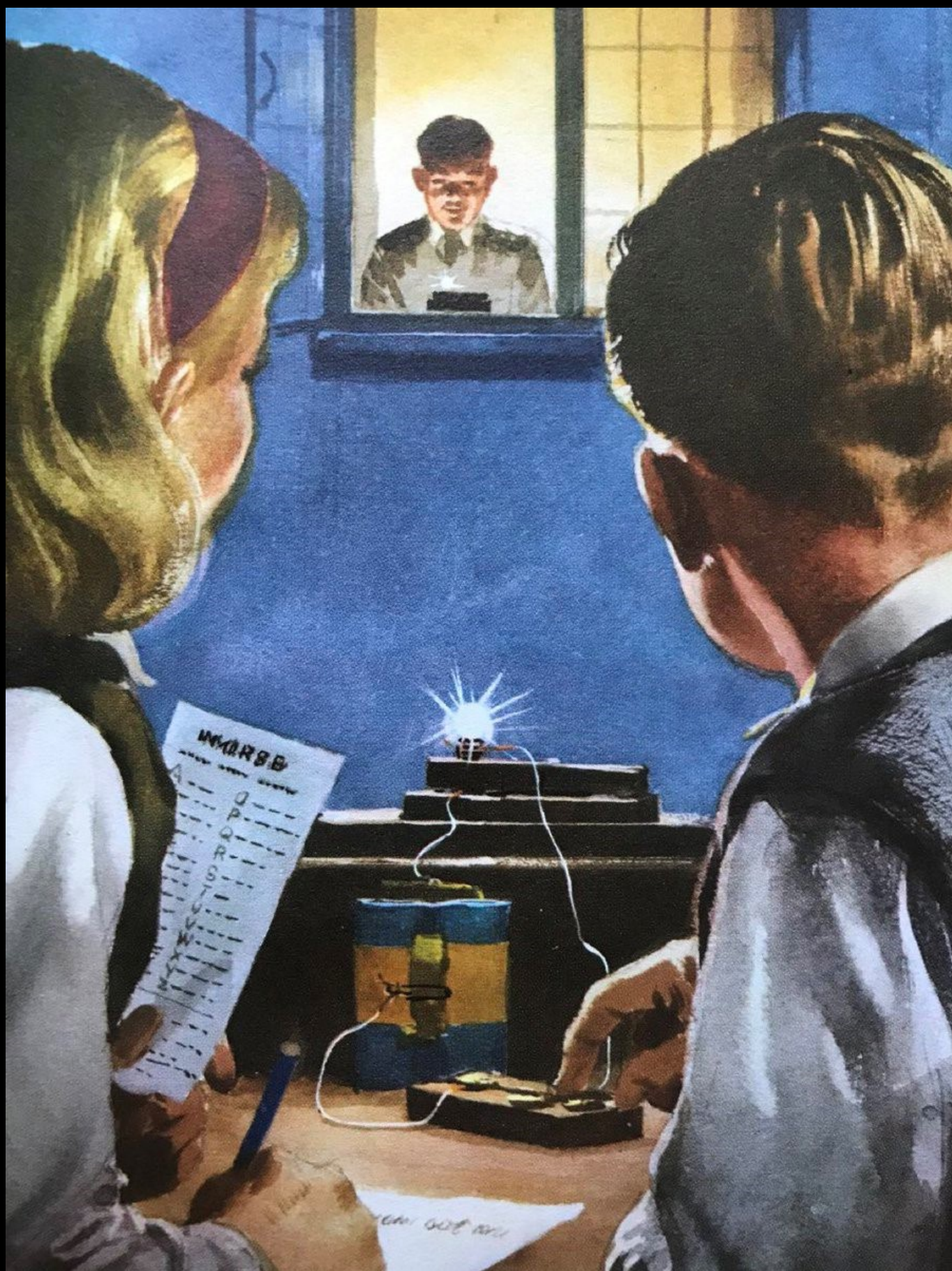
This Same Outfit Without Lamp \$2.00

Or your dealer can secure it for you. Order to-day. Descriptive circular and catalog of celebrated Knapp Motors and Electrical Specialties from 10c up mailed free on request.

KNAPP ELECTRIC & NOVELTY CO., 523 W. 51st St., New York City

Get good at morse code, and it's possible to play hangman, chess and other word and number games at great distances.

Picture via: El Blog De Moebius



Morse code remained of interest for many decades with children.

Art work by Harry Wingfield: via Lady Bird Fly Away Home.com

EVEREADY DAYLO



*The light that says
"There it is!"*

FUN! Exploring caves; signaling at night; making expeditions into the woods—just think of the fun you could have with an Eveready DAYLO this summer.

There's no other light like it. You can use an Eveready DAYLO anywhere and in perfect safety. It cannot cause fire. It cannot blow out. You can carry it with you, wherever you go—in your pocket or your belt.

Eveready DAYLO is fitted with a genuine TUNGSTEN Battery, the only battery that is long-lived, economical and really dependable. Always ask for this make where your battery must be renewed.



There are 77 different styles of this light at prices from 75c. up. In Canada 85c. and up. Ask to see them at electrical, hardware, drug or sporting goods stores. Look for the name "Eveready" on the light.

AMERICAN EVER READY WORKS
of National Carbon Company, Inc., Long Island City, New York
CANADIAN NATIONAL CARBON COMPANY, Limited
Toronto, Ont.

*Don't ask for a flashlight—
get an Eveready DAYLO*

*when danger hides
under cover of
darkness*

*when a swollen
stream has washed
the foot bridge
away*

*when you can't see
the ball that rolled
under the piazza*

*when you remember
the racquet you
left on the tennis
court*

*when you must find
the first-aid kit—
quick!*

*when you can't see
your way through
the woods to the
camp*

*whenever you need
light that is safe,
powerful and always
ready you need an
Eveready DAYLO.*

Banish the shadow monsters or turn yourself into one by turning it on and off under your chin.
c.1917 Eveready Daylo Torch / Flashlight.



Make the bizarre robot rabbit / dog come alive by activating their lightbulb eyes and using ventriloquism skills. 1920 Austrian rabbit novelty table light with white push-button (left) and bulldog circa 1930 (right)

Pictures via: Flashlight Museum.



Play at being a massive show-off with novelty illuminated badges.

1920s illuminated porcelain light up badges. A battery could sit in the user's pocket or be displayed on cork as above.

Pictures via: Flashlight museum.



Play at find the escaping prisoners or sinking boat or escaped tiger or whatever your imagination can come up with.

Paramount Electrical Toys search light.
Picture via: Vectis Auctions



The range of coin-operated “automatics” that were started using a single electric switch grew steadily throughout the 20th Century. Automations with animated scenes (some quite macabre such as public executions), Love Testers (from 1929) and marionettes (such as the laughing Policemen or Sailor) became commonplace in new amusement arcades and parlours.

1940s personality testers above. Laughing sailor picture below via: [Penny Machines](#).



Nov. 19, 1940.

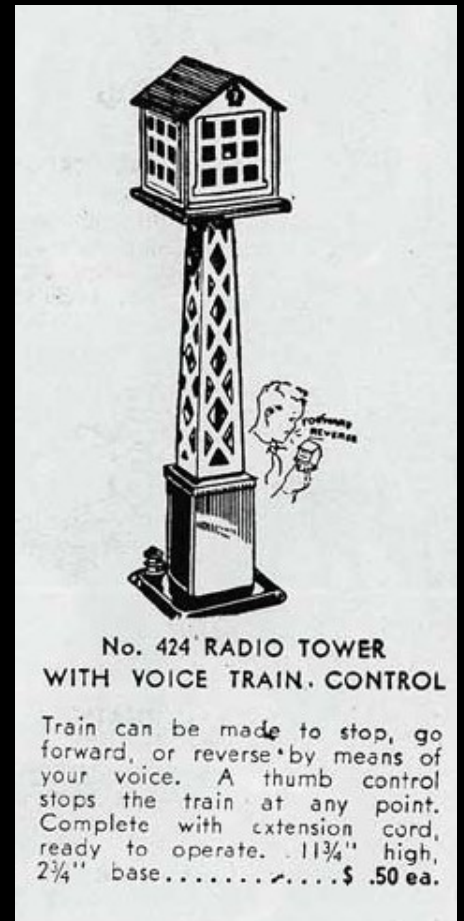
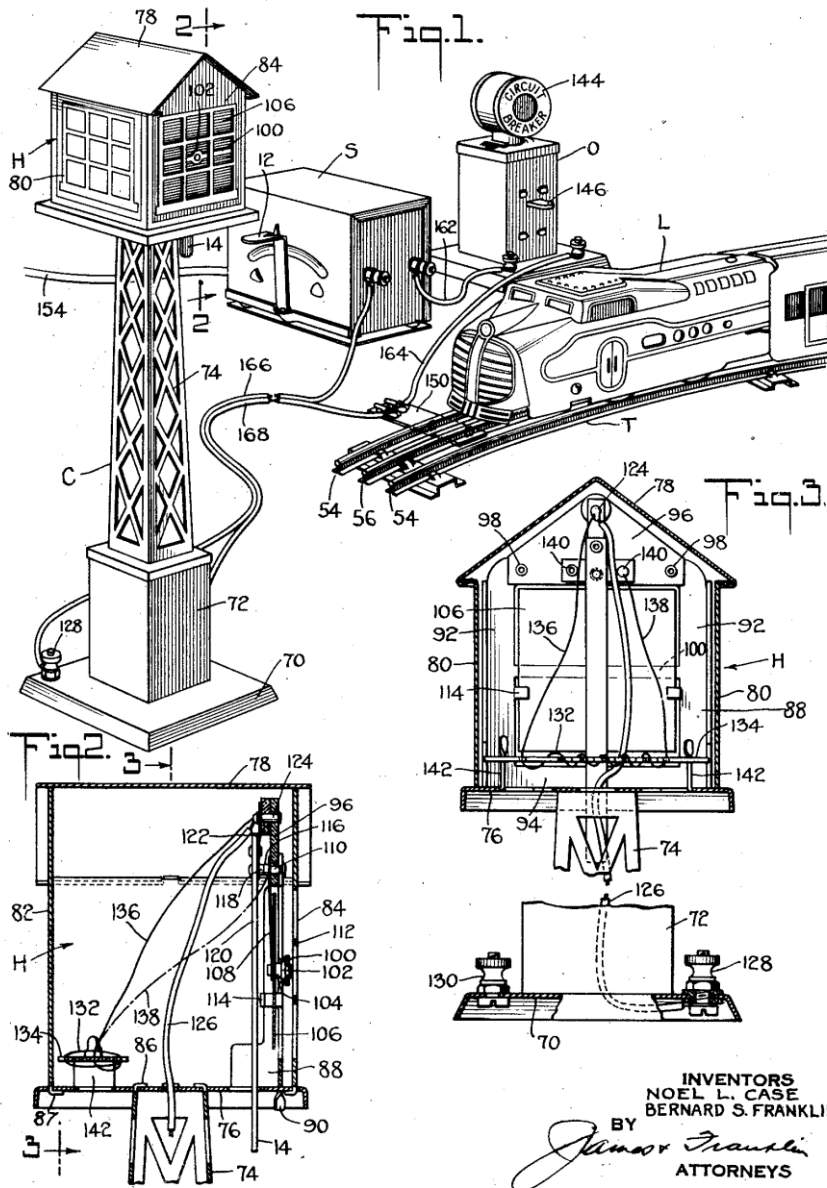
N. L. CASE ET AL

2,221,963

VOICE CONTROLLED TOY TRAIN SYSTEM

Filed June 10, 1937

4 Sheets-Sheet 1



Marx Voice Controlled on/off switch for a train-set - 1937 patent.



GAROD TELEVISION

It's New!

...and only GAROD has it
at no extra cost!

It's Telerific!

...only GAROD gives you
both sizes on one screen.

It's

TELE-ZOOM

...zoom from regular size
to enlarged close-ups, as
illustrated, by merely
pressing the remote con-
trol button.



**What you see is twice as
large... at no extra cost!**

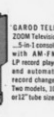
10" Model Equivalent to More Than Normal 12" Picture
12" Model Equivalent to More Than Normal 15" Picture
15" Model Equivalent to More Than Normal 20" Picture

ONLY GAROD HAS IT



GAROD sets the pace again! Some sets give you a rectangular picture... some sets give you a circular picture... BUT ONLY GAROD gives you BOTH ON the SAME SCREEN with no distortion. Now, at last, everybody can enjoy really BIG screen television.

Now, at last, you can see all the details... get a better view of everything television has to offer. The GAROD "TELE-ZOOM" circuit* is an exclusive feature on all GAROD 1949 Television Sets... and you get it AT NO EXTRA COST!



SEE a demonstration at your GAROD dealer today!



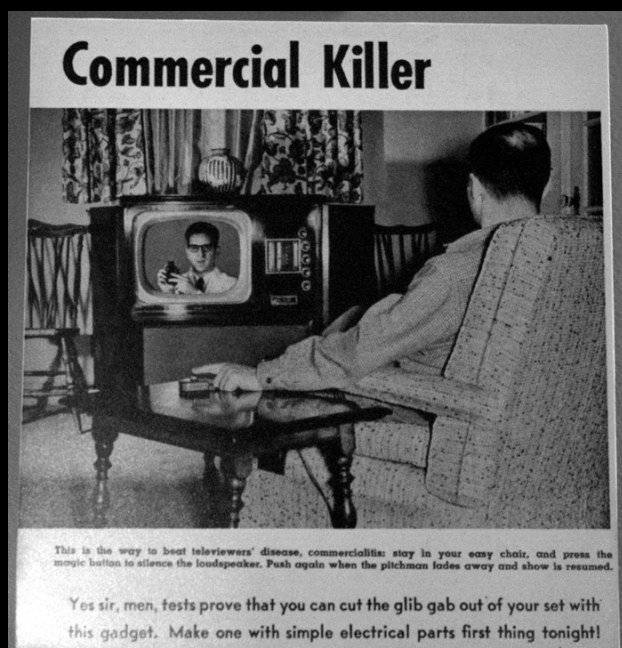
1948: The Garod Tele-zoom. A one button TV remote that toggled between a standard or zoomed in view. The Pittsburgh Post Gazette painted the benefits as including being able to admire attractive women in more detail.

Picture via: Amherst Newspapers



1951: Early one-switch home television games could be played from the comfort of your chair courtesy of Zenith's "Lazy Bones" single button wired remote control. This device gave Americans the power to flick between their two or three TV channels on the press of a switch.

Switch games included rapidly flicking between two or more TV channels to make a new improved programme. Also honing "commercial killer" skills by muting or dodging annoying adverts with expert timing, without missing the programme you actually wanted to watch. Other TV games relied upon the sound being off: Early home Karaoke with popstars on mute, with a prize for the best. Similarly, comedy ventriloquism putting words into the mouths of pompous muted public figures.



Tudor TRU-ACTION ELECTRIC GAMES

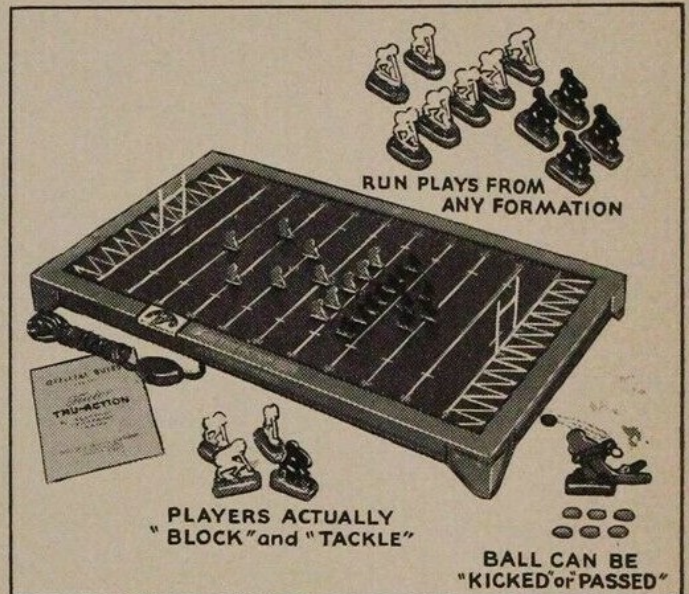
The sensation
of 1949!

No. 500

TRU-ACTION
ELECTRIC FOOTBALL

We could not supply the demand!

The ball is actually kicked and passed — the players run until tackled — plays can be run from any formation — line plays — end runs — forward passes — field goals — real TRU-ACTION Football right on the living room table!



No. 550

TRU-ACTION
ELECTRIC BASEBALL

The most amazing baseball game ever created!

The players actually run the bases — a fielder and a batter — permanently magnetized ball — the batter makes a hit — he starts for first — the fielder picks up the ball and tries to throw him out — double plays — stolen bases — nearly every play in baseball . . . really TRU-ACTION Baseball!

New!

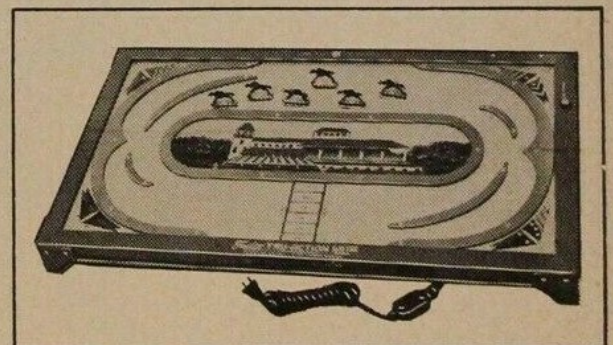
New!

No. 525

TRU-ACTION
ELECTRIC HORSE RACE

The most realistic Horse Race Game ever made!

Really TRU-ACTION — cannot be fixed! Every player has a chance at the start of every race. A fascinating adult sport! You will be astonished when you see the track-like things that happen when you're playing TRU-ACTION Horse Race! Ideal for the game room.



All games 25 x 15 1/4 inches
Packing 1/2 dozen . . . wght. 27 lbs.

Also the famous TUDOR
XYLOPHONES
PIANOS and BANJOS

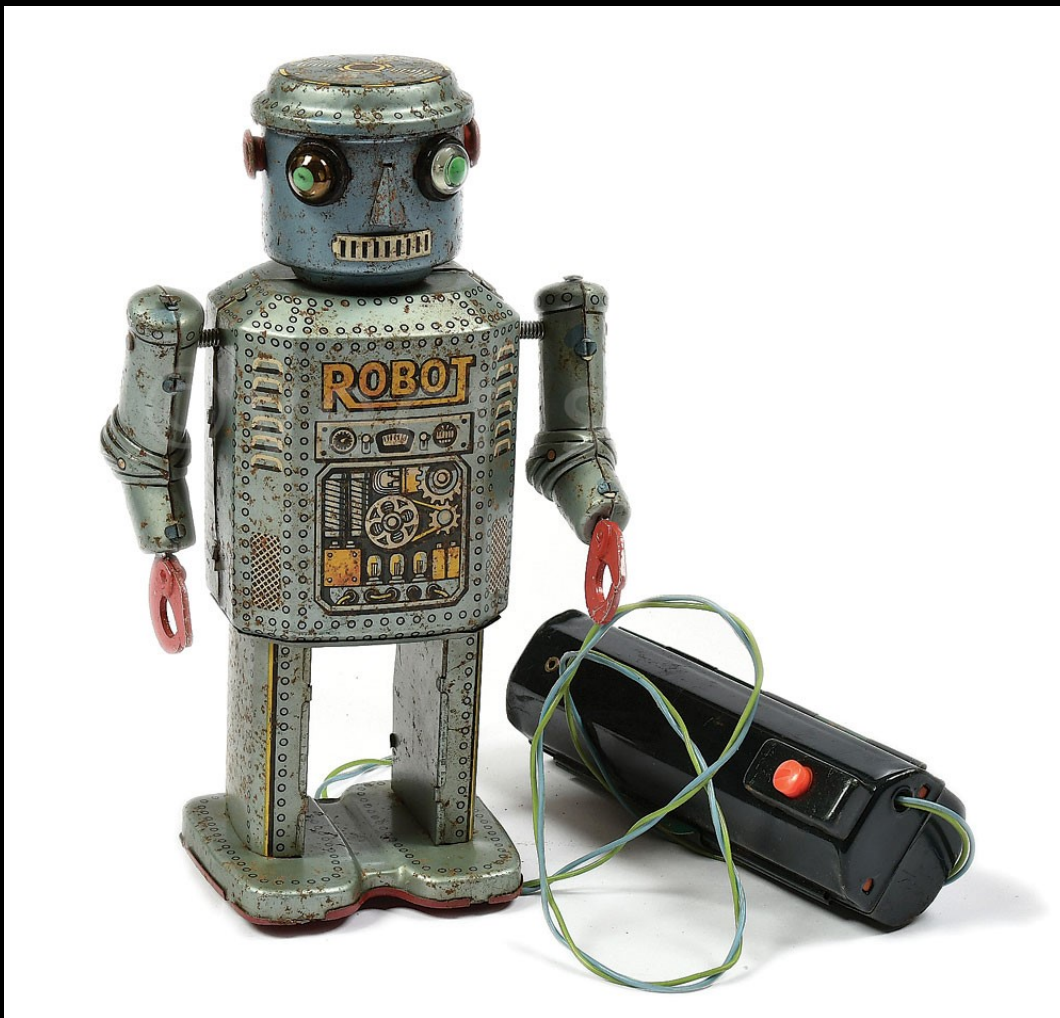
ROOM **551**

TUDOR METAL PRODUCTS CORPORATION

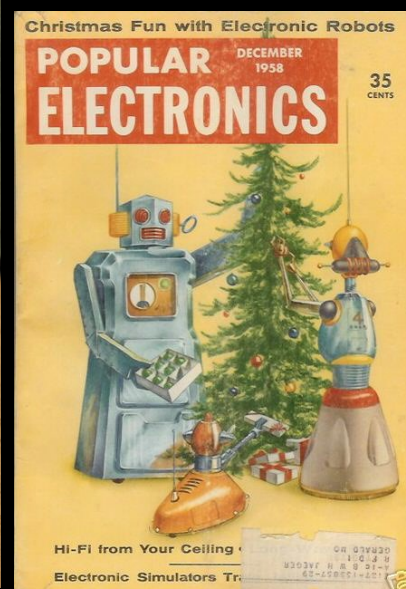
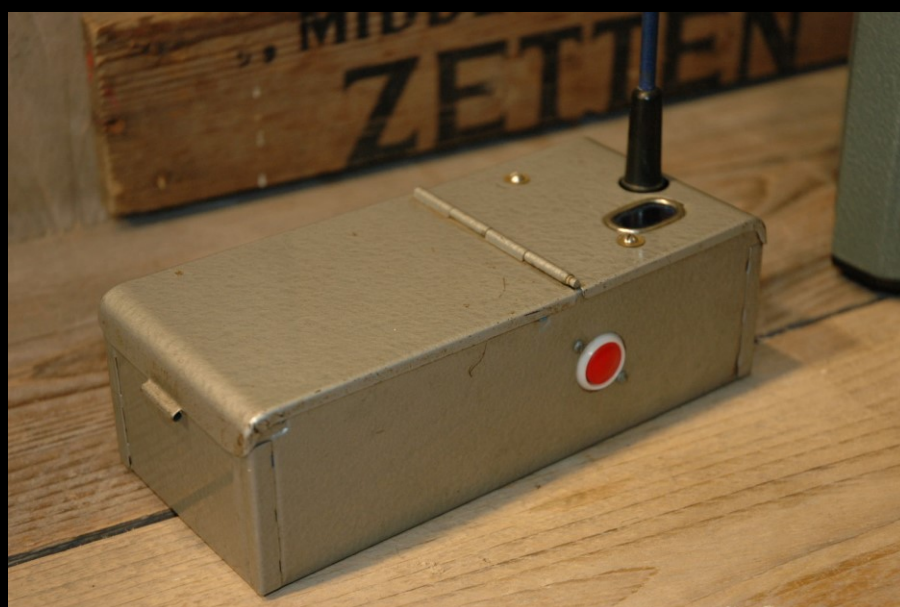
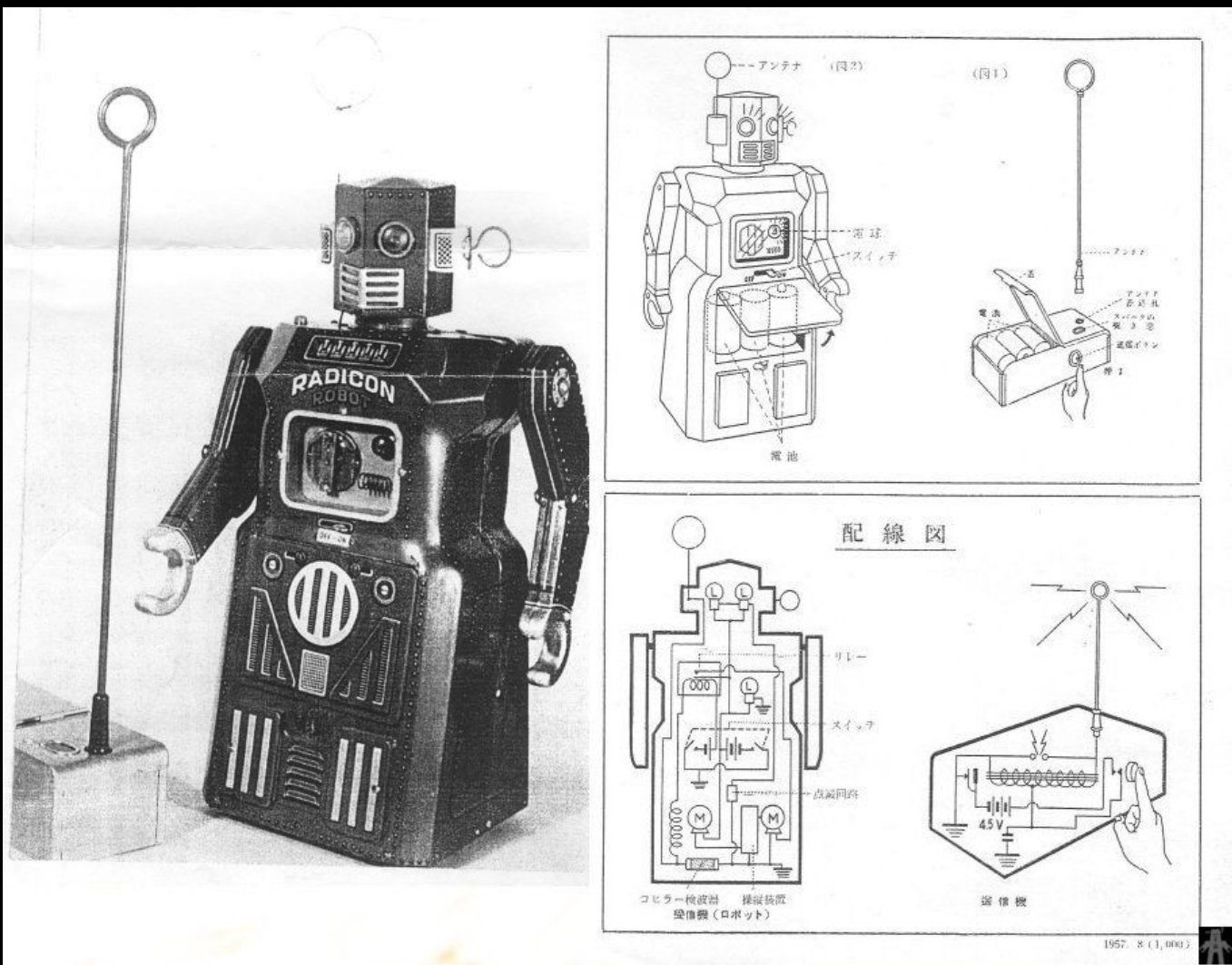
SHOWROOM 200 Fifth Ave., N.Y. City

FACTORY 176 Johnson St., Brooklyn 1, N.Y.

1950 Tru-Action Electric Horse Race. One-switch to start the race. Turn it off to stop at any time. Place your bets please. On your marks. Set. [Flick switch ON] Buzzzzzzzzzzz.....



The 1950s saw many affluent children bring one-button toys into their homes. Robots led the charge, with cars, dogs and all manner of things to follow.



1958: Radio-controlled toys from Masudaya Co. Japan. First in line was the Radicon Robot swiftly followed by Mrs Radicon Robot, Boats, Buses and Cars. Each press would cycle through a different function, left, forward, right, forward, backwards and stop (repeat). Games of skittles, chase a pet, obstacle course runs and mock interplanetary giant robot invasion ensued.



1959: Jamiesons launched the first of a range of mesmerising (for the time) electric one-button gambling games. First of these were Rotolite and Electro Dart. Soon after followed the Rotolite Sweetie. These machines shared much with the revolutionary assistive technology of the POSM (Patient Operated Selector Mechanism). See the [OneSwitch 100 Room 2](#) for more.

Picture via: SuperShotBattyManBor YouTube channel

