

The BaMaKey TP-II twin paddle

At the UK National Hamfest I noticed an unfamiliar paddle in use (but not for sale) by the guys on the Kenwood stand. I was interested enough search the internet to find out who the maker was, and bought one.



This paddle is intended to be used /P or /A as well as in the shack. The totally enclosed, lightweight, mechanism can be used on its own (when /A or /P), or fixed to a heavy base (for home use) by magnets that hold on to the bolt heads inside the rubber feet.

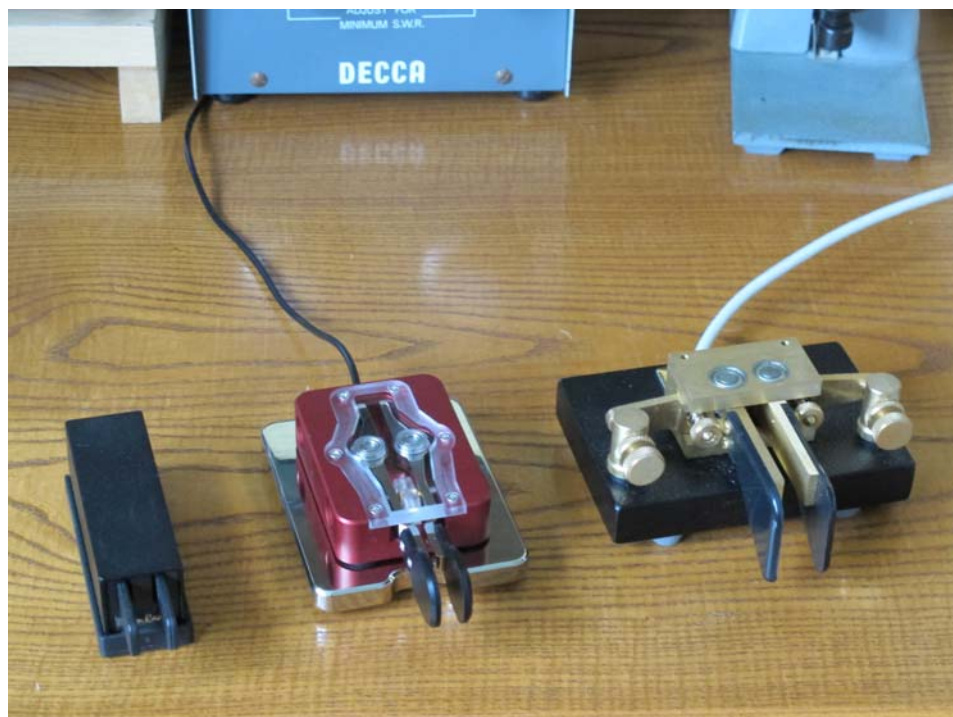


The heavy base is kept in place on your desk by four 'gel' feet.

This paddle is manufactured in Germany by "BaMaTech". A precision engineering firm owned by Markus Baseler (DL6YYM). It uses magnets for the return force, rather than springs. This is claimed to allow very close spacing and very light return forces without the need for regular adjustment that you would with springs in such a configuration because magnets do not suffer from tension 'creep' in the way that springs do.

The requirements of a paddle for /P or /A operation are very different from paddles being used at home. I imagine many portable operators use something like the 'Palm Mini' paddle. It would be possible to use the Palm Mini on a heavy metal base at home, but having owned a Palm Mini paddle for some time it is not something I would choose for lengthy CW sessions at home. The Palm is very well made, but the extremely tiny size of its mechanism imposes limitations on the engineering.

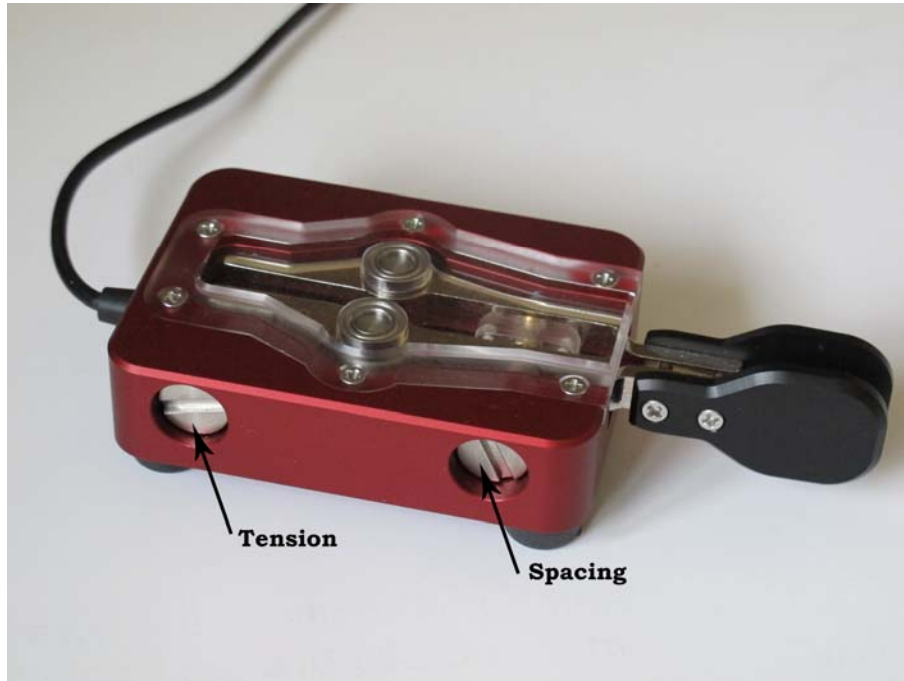
In terms of size the BaMaKey is between that of a Palm Mini and a conventional paddle when sitting on its metal base and so the engineering can be more substantial. That makes it more likely to be comfortable for use as a main station key.



In terms of price this paddle is similar to the low end of the Begali magnetic range. German engineering has a reputation for quality and the BaMaKey does not disappoint. The paddle mechanism is available in black or red. The heavy base has a high quality chrome finish.

I have been using the paddle for some time now and it is my paddle of choice at home. It is the first paddle I have owned that uses magnets instead of springs for the return force and I think magnets are definitely a better technique if you prefer a light touch and close spacing.

I use the paddle for my regular two-hour long CW Sunday morning sked, and for the Monday morning RAOTA CW net. The paddle feels entirely comfortable to use even over long periods of operation.



Adjustment of spacing and tension is done via two large bolt heads on each side of the paddle mechanism, which are locked in position by small grub screws on the underside.

The grub screws need a small Allen key (hex) to turn them, and one is provided with the paddle.

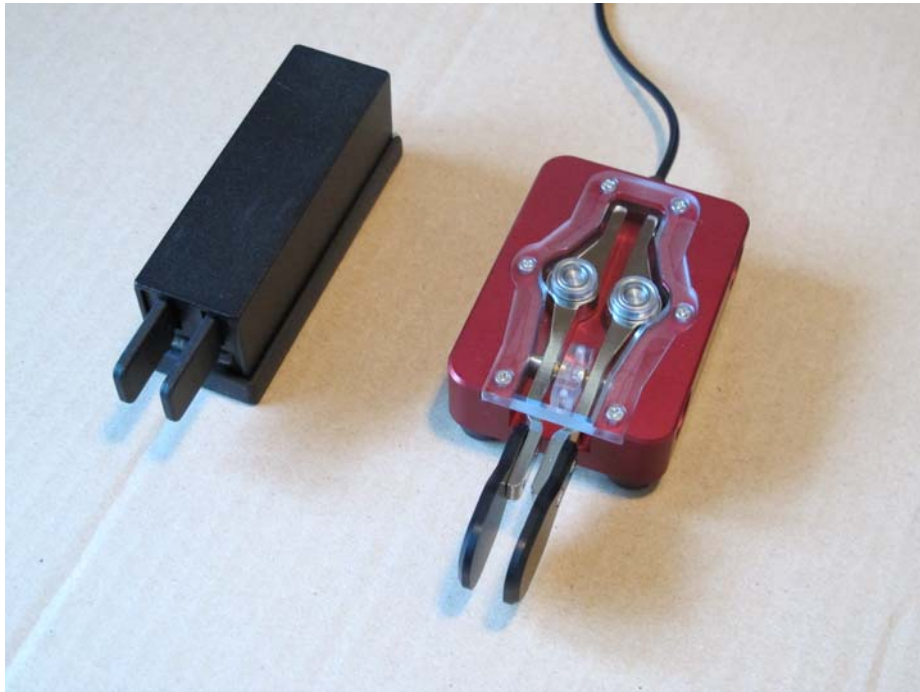
The 'tension' provided by the magnets in the BaMaTech paddle can be adjusted between 5g and 45g. As supplied the tension is set to 12g.

The 4 holes in the metal base, into which the rubber feet of the paddle mechanism locate, are spaced slightly differently for the front & back. This means the paddle mechanism only fits on the base one way round. It does mention this in the instructions, but I found out the hard way 😊

Initially I noticed a slight amount of sideways movement as the rubber feet were not a tight fit in the holes in the base. Even with the force of the magnets pulling down, the mechanism would move very slightly sideways on the base during use.

This is mentioned in the instructions. By gently tightening the bolts inside the rubber feet you squash them, and they swell out sideways until they are a perfect fit in the holes and there is no sideways movement at all.

On the underside of the metal base is a small grub screw. Provided in case you lose one of those in the paddle mechanism when making tension/spacing adjustments. They are very tiny, so if one dropped onto the carpet you'd have trouble trying to find it, and if you were out /P at the time you probably never would.



The paddle is supplied with a 1.4metre long lead for connection to the rig, terminated with a 3.5mm stereo jack plug. It is a similar length to the Palm Mini, but extra width means the mechanism can be much more substantial and that makes it suitable for main station use.

For use in the field I would prefer it to have a detachable lead but maybe other people prefer a fixed lead. I mentioned this idea to Markus, who said he might consider the change in the future.

If you are looking for paddle that is suitable for use at your main station and also when /A or /P then the BaMaTech TP-II is worth considering.

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Review by David (G3ZPF) : November 2017

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