

Marconi Type 365 Keys

by Wyn Davies

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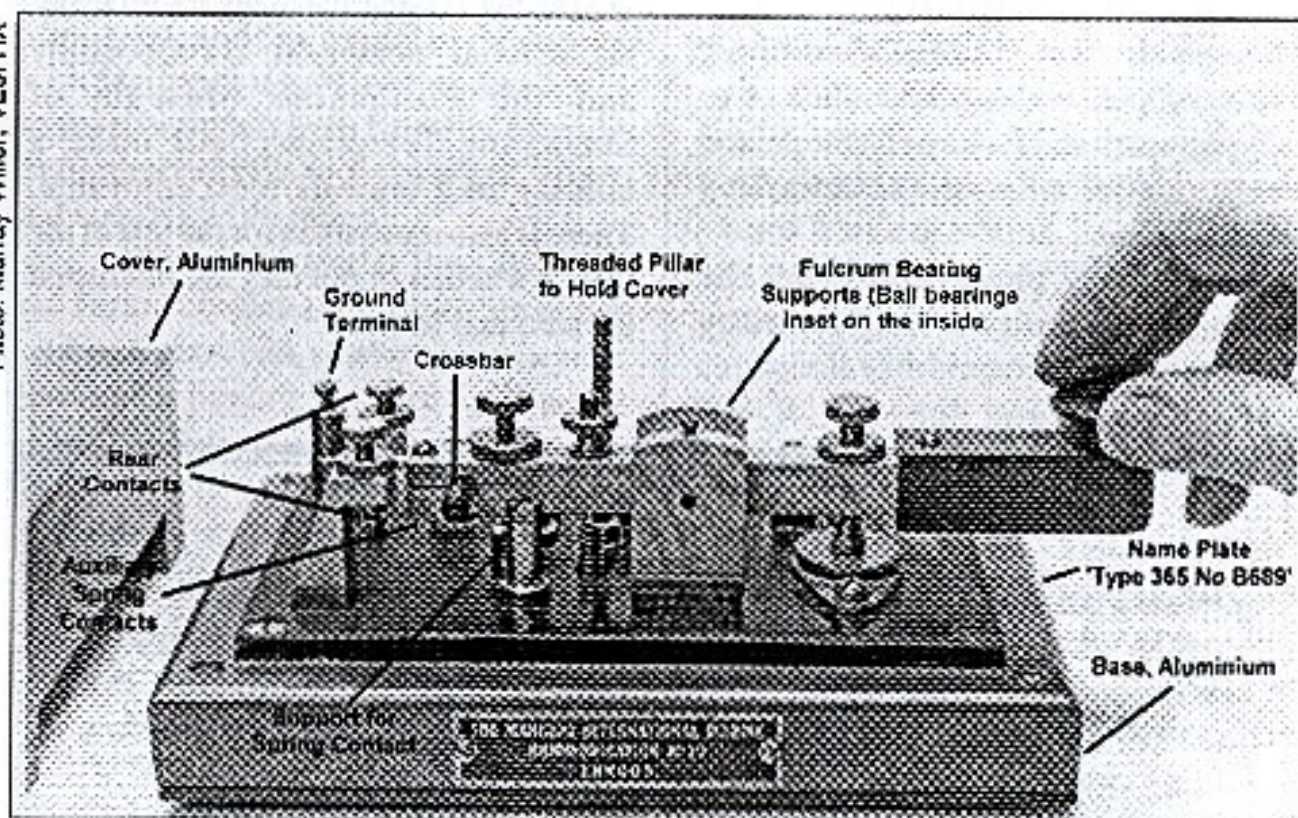
THE MARCONI TYPE 365 series of keys, much beloved by many merchant marine Radio Officers has a long history. Sometimes referred as the 'Marconi Classic', this article is a compendium of information on the range of models. This is by no means complete and additional information which confirms or clarifies the history, design and use of these keys would be very welcome.

Type 365

The first model was the Type 365 (with no letter suffix). The exact year of introduction is unclear but first references to it seem to be in 1935. The bakelite sub-

base was fitted onto an aluminium base, with an aluminium cover attached to the base by a threaded rod and a knurled nut. The fulcrum was supported by roller bearings countersunk into the inner walls of the assembly. The base and cover of

Photo: Murray Willer, VE3FRX

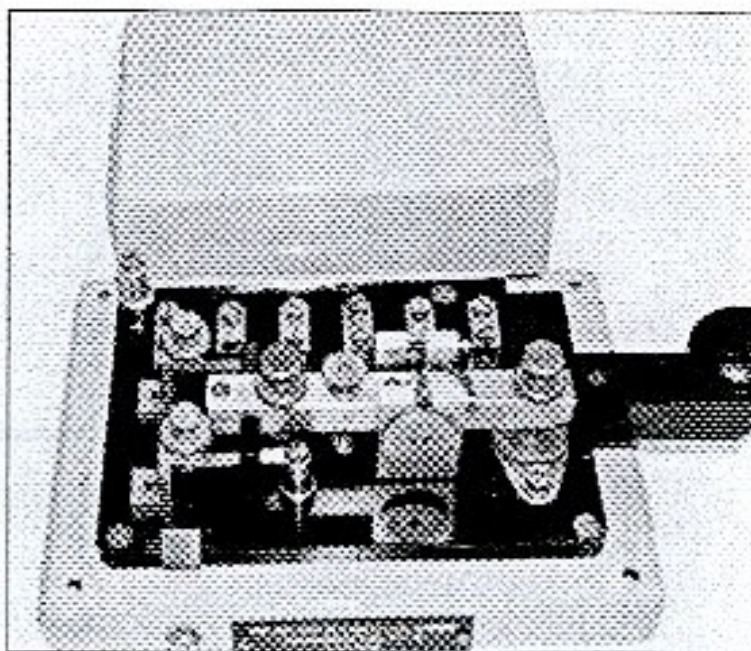


The first Type 365. It has no year designation. The first reference found to this version is dated 1935.

the later models were made of brass, probably because salt-laden atmospheres corroded the aluminium.

Model 365A

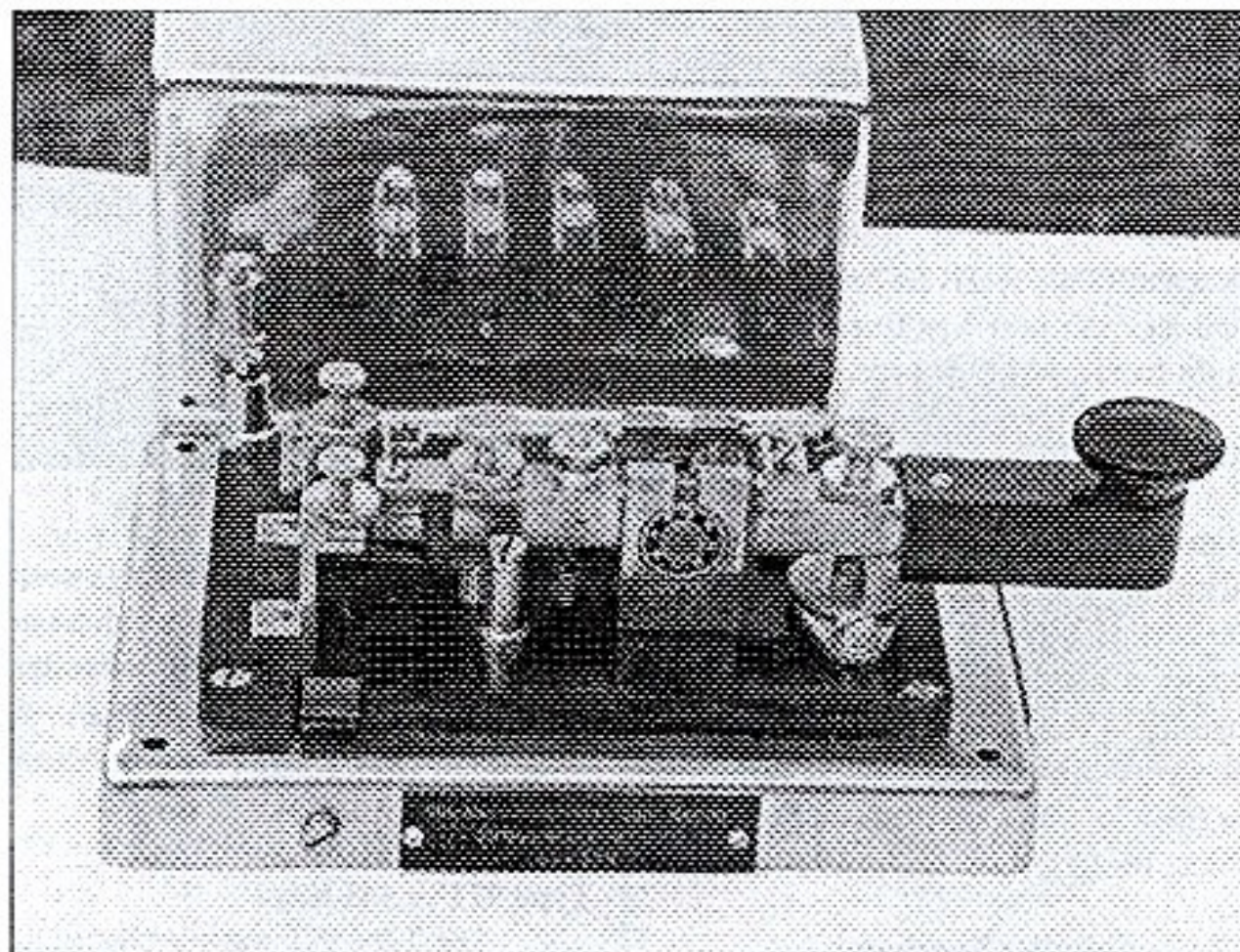
Next came the 365A, of which there were two versions, one with roller bearings and the other with sleeve bearings. They were painted in a variety of shades of blues and grey. It was common for Radio Officers to remove the paint and polish the brass. The cover was sometimes used as the radio room ash tray. The 365 and 365A models were fitted with auxiliary contacts at the rear to



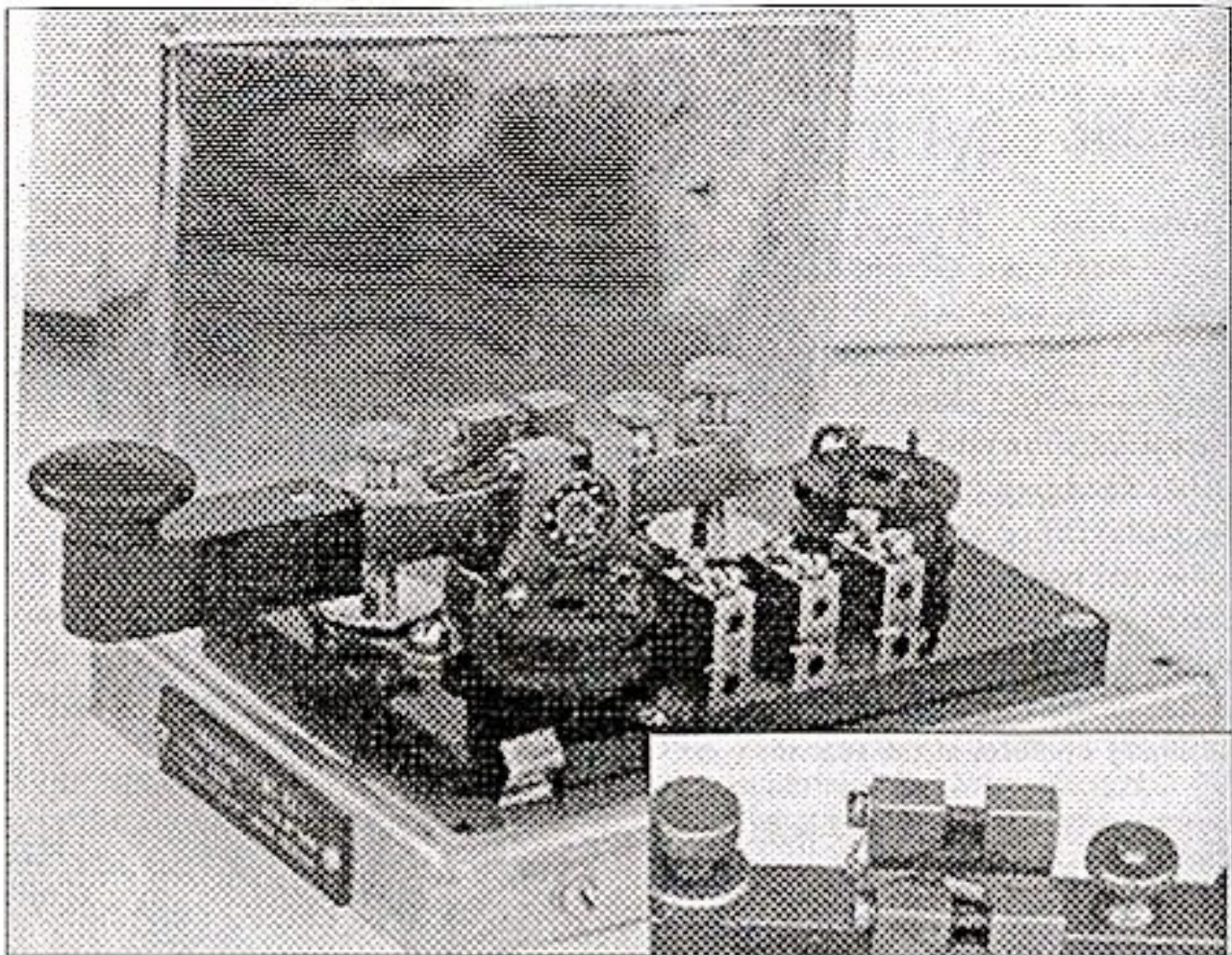
Photo/Collection: Wyn Davies

Type 365A with sleeve bearings.

Photo Collection: Wyn Davies



Type 365A with roller bearings. The paint has been removed to reveal the brasswork.



Type 365B with roller bearings.

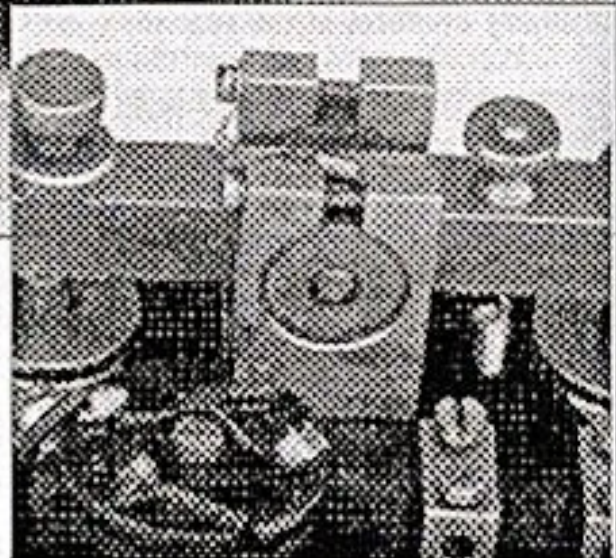
desensitise the receivers on 'key-down' and an earth post was fitted at the rear right-hand side of the base.

Model 365B

The 365B seems to have been introduced in the early 1940s. There is also reference to it in an 'Oceanspan VI' manual of 1962. Again there were two versions, fitted either with sleeve or roller bearings. It was fitted with a key-click suppression circuit comprising two coils at the rear with capacitors and resistors under the base.

Sleeve vs Roller Bearings

Some people are of the opinion that early models were fitted with sleeve

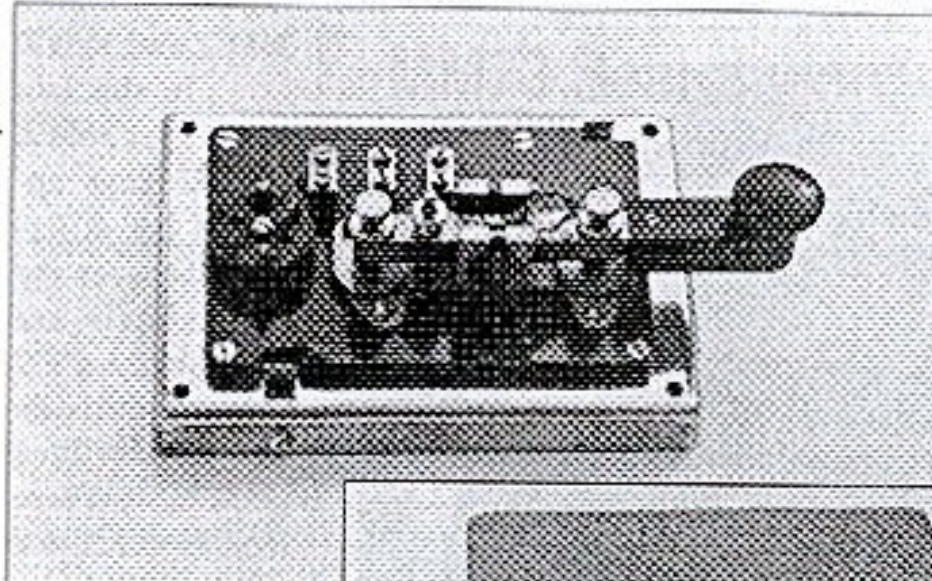


Type 365B with sleeve bearings.

bearings and that the roller bearings were introduced later. Others believe that the keys were originally designed with roller bearings and that the sleeve bearings were introduced during WWII when there was a shortage of roller bearings.

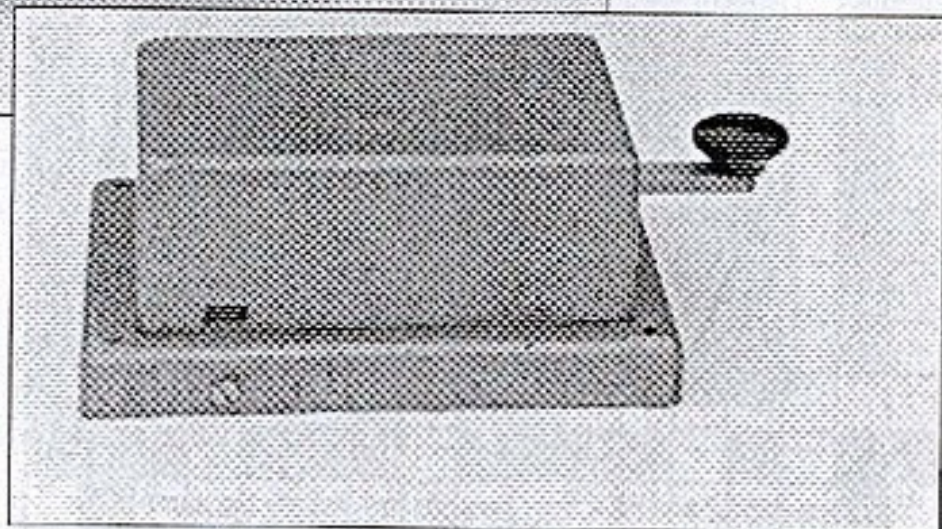
Type 971 vs 365 Keys

The Type 971 was introduced in the late 1940s and continued until the late 1950s but it proved so unpopular

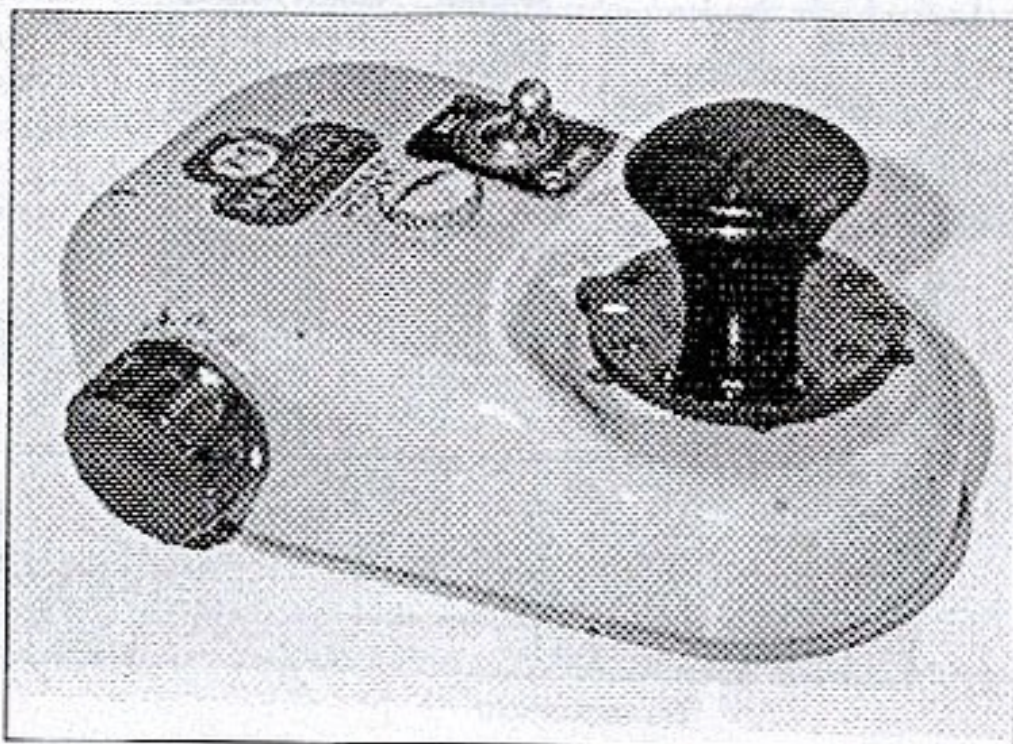


Type 365C - note that it has only one key-click suppression coil fitted.

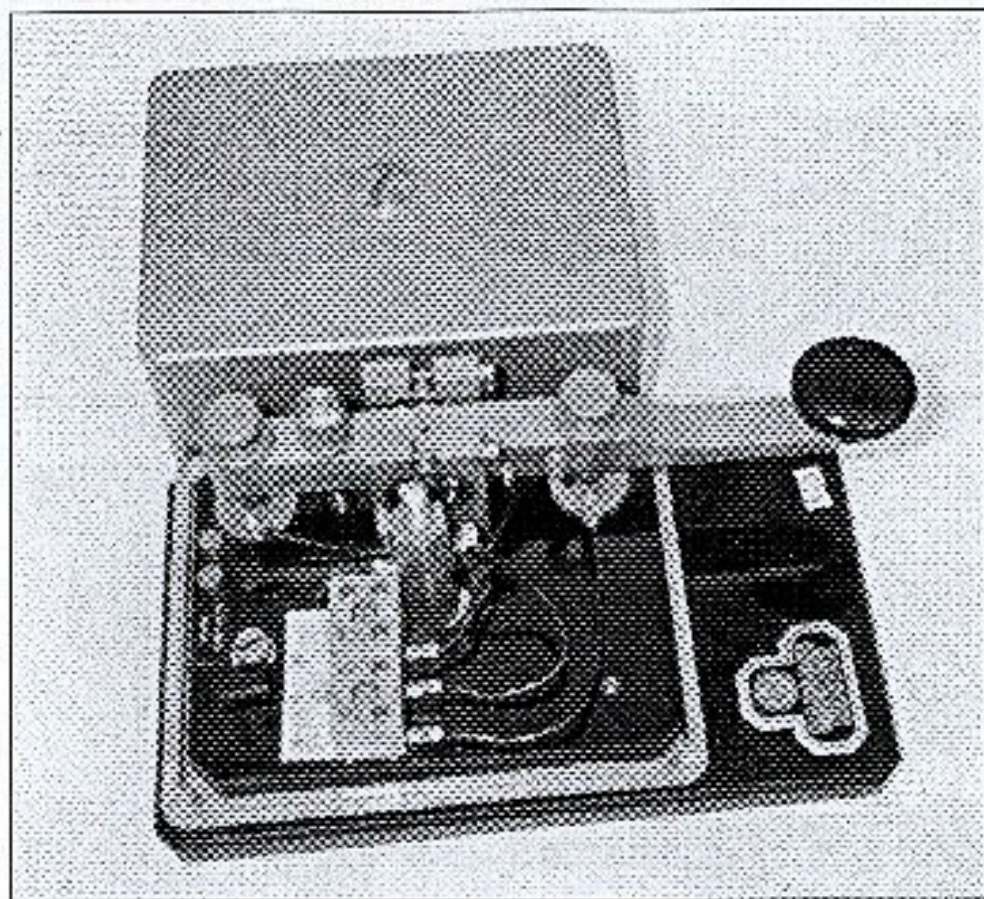
with Radio Officers that the Marconi Company had to bring back the 365 models. There was a shortage of the latter at the various depots and keys were assembled from spare parts, hence some keys were incomplete, i.e. no sleeve on the arms, one key-click suppression coil instead of two or no auxiliary contacts. Some believe that these keys were designated 365C and 365D but this cannot be confirmed.



Another version of the 365D - The D versions were possibly made from spare parts at the various Marconi depots.



The unpopular Type 971.



Type 365EZ and FZ – both versions are visually the same.

365EZ and 365FZ

In the late 1960s Type 365EZ and FZ keys appeared but differences between the two models are negligible. An 'FZ' has been noted with only one coil fitted to the base. These models were fitted with a diecast aluminium cover made by the Eddystone Company.

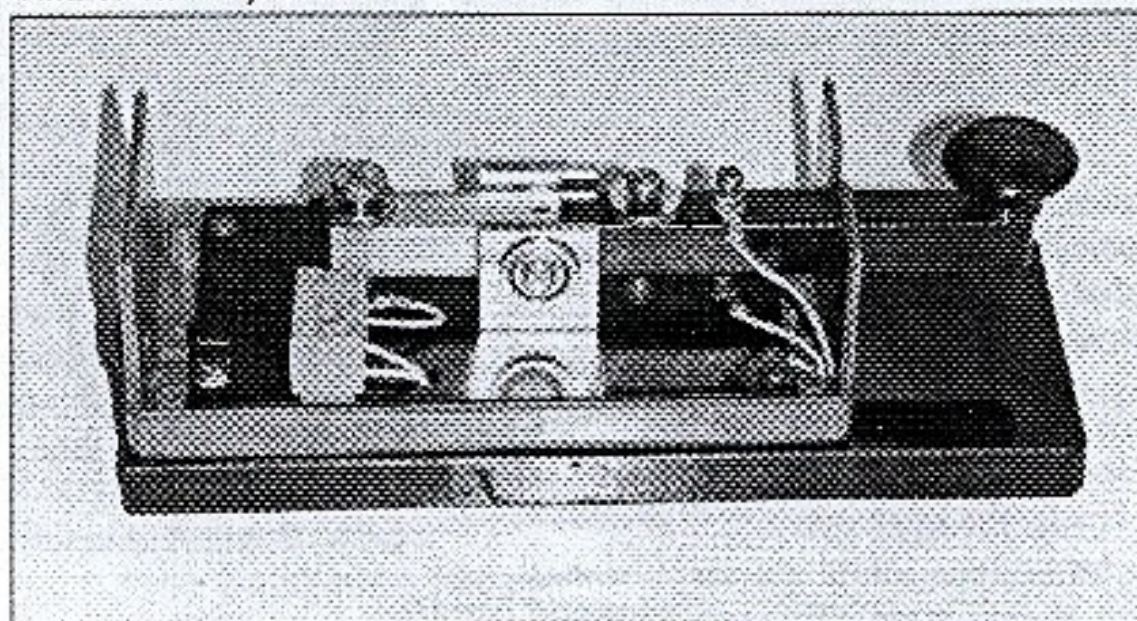
Final Key

The final key made by the Marconi Company was the

Type EZ50 but it lacked the 'feel' of the lovely 365s. *MM*

(Special thanks to Geoff Arnold, John Francis and Murray Willer who contributed information to this article)

Photo/Collection: Wyn Davies



The final Marconi key, Type EZ 50 with the cover removed.