

Pfeiffer – Keys



Dear Subscribers of this first newsletter,

Today, I would like to share how the revival of Uli Scheunemann's Morse keys came about. First, I need to clarify that I have been learning Morse code at the CW-Academy for about half a year. So, I'm a complete beginner. To motivate myself, I wanted to get a nice Morse key, and I originally had a used Schurr in mind. Instead, I came across a Scheunemann DIRIGENT on eBay. It looked almost identical to a Schurr, but I had never heard of the name Scheunemann before. So, I consulted Google and found the Scheunemann-Morsetasten website. There, I read that the production of these keys had been discontinued due to health reasons, and the search for a successor had unfortunately not been successful.

This immediately fascinated me. I am self-employed in the mechanical engineering field and love to develop, design, build, and see machines, devices, and equipment work to the satisfaction of my clients. Fortunately, they have always done this so far. What added to this was the fact that, at that time, I had already designed my own Morse key. The key I was using for practice kept sliding around a bit. Anyone who knows this issue understands how much it can be irritating. There is a prototype of that new key. Weighing 2.5 kg, it stays completely immobile on the table, and because of its appearance, it will simply be called "Brick."

So, in May 2024, I sent an email to Uli expressing my interest in taking over the business. His reply came quickly. We then had a phone conversation, and I visited him on my way back from the Ham Radio event in June. We had a good conversation, Uli's XYL made an excellent Black Forest cake, and we sealed the deal with a handshake, initially. Later, we also signed an official contract.

Unfortunately, there were no drawings for Uli's Morse keys. Nothing was left from his workshop except for a few small parts like screws, nuts, and springs. Uli described to me with sketches and words how he had made the keys, the fixtures he used, and gave tips on what to particularly pay attention to, etc. It took me about three months, aside from my regular work (and CW practice sessions), to create the standard-compliant drawings for the first key, the DIRIGENT. It was an interesting process. I had to understand Uli's working methods: what he did, how and why he did it, what came first, and what came next, etc. I tried to imagine what his spray booth looked like, where the cleaning, painting, and drying took place. Uli did everything in a sensible way. After all, he had spent years producing keys for Mr. Schurr before he became his successor.

At least for now, I won't be producing all the parts by myself. Some parts, such as the base plate, are simply more sensible to make with CNC machines nowadays. These will be produced by a trusted supplier in our immediate neighborhood. All parts will be ground, painted, assembled, and adjusted by us. Ultimately, everything (except perhaps for the brass) will be "Made in Germany."

In January, we will begin producing parts for the first keys. We plan to make 20 DIRIGENT keys and 10 EINHEBEL keys initially. We should be able to deliver from February/March onward. So, I ask for a little more patience. I was more optimistic in my initial statements regarding availability. I underestimated completely the effort required for preparations.

Lastly, a bit of organizational information:

I have founded the company PFEIFFER-KEYS for the construction, distribution, and repair of Morse keys. Uli's keys will be sold under the "Edition Uli Scheunemann" label, keeping their original names, such as "DIRIGENT - Edition Uli Scheunemann."

The website for PFEIFFER-KEYS is under construction. I hope to revise the draft between Christmas and New Year so that the page can go online soon.

Last but not least, I wish you all a Merry and Peaceful Holiday Season and a great, safe start into the New Year 2025.

Vy 73 de Martin, DL1MP – N4VV

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Martin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.