

Detector Field Test

White's Prizm IV

"Maz"

In the past I have been asked by manufacturers to carry out test reports on a variety of different products. In the past I have declined, my reasoning being that as a dealer it might seem that I was biased towards a particular make or model. What, then, has changed my mind? The answer is a product that I feel I can fully endorse, this being the White's Prizm IV.

I think that most would agree that White's machines are of excellent build quality, very reliable, and trouble free. However, in my opinion the "box" design of recent models - especially the MXT and DFX - should have been built around a different style. Although produced in a tried and tested format, these excellent machines would have had a greater impact if they had been manufactured in a new control box.

Such is not the case with the Prizm range of machines. White's have produced a new range of detectors to replace their "Classic" models. These detectors are not revamps of existing

models but brand new designs in a totally new box. Personally, I prefer to use a "no fuss", switch-on-and-go machine. It needs to be simple to use, have a display, reasonably deep, have good discrimination, be light in weight, and work well inland as well as on wet sand. That is a tall order for any one detector, but the Prizm IV possesses all of these qualities and a lot more.

The simplicity of set up for use is striking. Just switch on and the detector is in single tone mode (all signals sound the same). The discrimination in this standard mode is set to perfection, knocking out surface iron and silver paper/foil (this is indicated on the display by two icons underneath the scale of the target identification section). The sensitivity is set two places down from full, and I found this setting ideal for wet sand use. On dry sand you can up the sensitivity to full and switch to tone ID. This helps with the identification of coins and the elimination of unwanted items such as the hated pull

tabs. Large objects give a very low bass tone (irrespective of their composition) and in this setting coke cans are knocked out with no loss of thin gold rings or small coins. On my inland tests I stuck to single tone, and reduced the discrimination down to the first settings so that only iron was blanked out. In most cases it was possible to work with sensitivity full on. Using the detector in this way the results were remarkable.

Beach Test

When the machine arrived the first thing that struck me was its lightness. It is powered by just two PP3 9 volt batteries, and as these and the circuitry are housed in a very stylish slim-line plastic box, you can detect all day without fear of arm ache.

I was set to go to Benidorm the next day, so I wanted to test the machine out on wet sand before deciding whether or not to take it with me. I raced to the nearest beach, Swansea Bay, to try it out. On arrival I found that the tide had just turned and was heading out, meaning that practically all of the sand was wet. Swansea Bay is not the best beach in the world to detect on and I have experienced sporadic false signals with many machines on it. This is partly due to the mineralisation, but I also think coastal and land radio signals play their part. On switching the machine on it began to splutter a bit but as I walked towards the water's edge the Prizm seemed to settle down. My first signal was a pound coin, at about 6in down. Several pull tabs at various depths followed, and then I had a signal that jumped from 5 cents to the 25 cents, and then into the middle. I dug down and spread the sand out with my foot. I recovered a 2p coin but another sweep of the spoil produced a £1 coin. I checked the hole again, and still a very strong response came from the Prizm. The hole was now 10in deep and reaching into the black sand. I took another shovelful out and recovered the final target, a £2 coin. "This machine is definitely on its way to Benidorm!" I thought, and I couldn't wait to try it out there.





Control box.

Benidorm was a big disappointment so far as detecting was concerned. At times there were so many people detecting of the beach that I thought I was at the Newbury Rally! In addition, a beach cleaning machine swept the beach every night, so there was not a great deal to find. However, I did find some old 500 peseta coins at 9in in the dry sand, and two euro coins at about the same depth. I also found one 14ct gold wedding ring in the wet sand, one silver ring, a large silver bangle, a silver chain with stones, and about 120 euros. This resulted from two to three hours detecting every evening. In use the Prizm was faultless.

On my return from Spain I was eager to test the Prizm out on inland sites. It soon became apparent that the Prizm can provide a very respectable depth inland. My first signal was a brass button, about half an inch in diameter, that came up from 6in with a very loud precise signal. My second proved to be a Roman grot at 5in.

A few hours later I had unearthed at least 12 shotgun cartridges and a George III penny at 9in, without digging up a single piece of iron all day. I think the Prizm IV is a remarkable detector in a class of its own.

Plus Points

One of the big bonus points of this detector is the battery system. As stated, it employs just two PP3 batteries housed at the rear of the control box. They drop straight in with no fuss

or bother (see photograph) and I have used the machine for over 30 hours without changing the two alkaline batteries. This leads me to believe that it should work well with Nimh rechargeable batteries.

Dislikes

The Prizm IV is fitted with a depth indicator that is reasonably accurate, but I personally don't quite understand why anyone needs it; I would have preferred a battery indicator instead. It also has a notch system which, quite frankly

again, with the Prizm's excellent ID and discrimination circuits is not needed. I would love to have an identification strip that categorises the signal in British coin symbols (but you get used to it). Finally, I don't like the name "Prizm". Surely with all the brains and talent available at White's somebody could have thought up a better name?

Specifications

There are three models of Prizm detectors: the II, III, and IV. The II and III are fitted with 8in solid coils but the IV has a 9.5in polo coil. Although I only tested the Prizm IV, I have been told that the others are equally as good in many ways but are slightly less versatile and not quite as deep seeking as the IV. The display is simple to understand and self-explanatory. Discrimination is set by a sliding scale icon, and a black easy-to-read arrow moves to the right in segments to indicate target ID. The same sort of system is used for sensitivity in a gradually increasing block. All the controls are of the press pad type with the all metal/target pinpoint situated in the middle.

Conclusion

The Prizm IV is the type of machine that will suit very many detectorists. It would make a fantastic first machine, but also be ideal for the detectorist who wants to upgrade from a basic two control type. It will hold its own against many machines costing much more, and at around £395 is a serious contender for the best all-round value-for-money metal detector on sale in the UK. **TH**



Battery compartment.