

Detector Field Test

Black Knight Pro III

I knew it was going to be a hard task finding a professional machine without spending a king's ransom. The machine was for my father, who is now retired and struggling to survive on a pension. I have always told him that you get what you pay for in the world of metal detectors and the entry-level machines were only a stepping-stone. Once you become hooked you need more features and better performance and so the cheaper machines are, in a way, false economy.

Early last week Mick and myself took a drive down to Detecnicks as we had a spare day and the ground was too hard for detecting. We were greeted by the usual friendly insults and a cup of tea. We then sat down for a chat.

Nick was unpacking a machine and mentioned that this was a new line he would soon to be selling. He said it was made in China, which made me grin. But then he went on to tell me that most of the top machines had their circuit boards made in China anyway, which promptly wiped the grin off my face.

When he had put the detector together, it really caught my eye and got me interested. This machine looked at least like something you would pay £500 for. I put some batteries in and powered it up. The first thing I noticed was that it had a lovely mellow tone that was pleasant on the ears. I then looked at the features and had to ask the price.

"Just £200", Nick said.

I found this incredible in that the detector has the following features:-

- * frequency adjust
- * full range discrimination
- * black sand mode
- * separate sensitivity control
- * drop in battery pack
- * three-piece stem
- * trigger operated pinpoint/all metal/discrimination switch
- * 9.5in polo search coil
- * separate ground adjusting pot

At this point it sounds like I am a salesman for Detecnicks, but I can assure you that I am not. Nor am I receiving any payment for this report. I for one am not a lover of field tests, so I agreed with the guys that I would test the machine and be totally honest about it; they said be as hard as you like.

I called my dad from the shop and

Reader's Field Test

Gary



told him about my discovery. He said straight away that he would buy. I told him that I would meet up with him on Sunday, which left Saturday afternoon for me to try it for myself.

First Field Experience

The field was stubble and very close to a Roman settlement, but finds are quite rare as metal detectorists have been over it for years. However, it still produces the odd nice find so I thought this would be a good test for the Black Knight Pro.

I set the discrimination in the middle of the "trash" segment to get an idea of what the machine would ignore. The toggle switch was in the "magnetic" position and the sensitivity was on the preset. Within seconds I got a good clean tone and discovered the target to be a nail, so I turned the discrimination up until the nail was rejected. It was just on the edge of the "rings" segment, which worried me a little as I thought if I was rejecting rings there might be other things I would lose. My fears were soon put to rest when my next signal was a tiny piece of foil. The machine was very stable and the audio tone pleasant to listen to.

Having sat down for a cuppa, I started thinking about the magnetic/normal toggle switch, and decided to try the machine in normal. After several minutes searching it became apparent that things were very quiet even with the sensitivity full up. I pulled a small Roman grot out of my pouch and waved it in front of the coil.... nothing.... so I lowered the discrimination all the way to zero. The signal from the coin was now clear and crisp. Then I tried the nail again, and found that it was completely rejected.

It therefore appears that the magnetic mode allows full user control; you can turn the discrimination all the way down to accept iron. This can be great if you are searching for deep relics; and with the switch in the normal mode the detector automatically rejects iron at zero discrimination, which is ideal for everyday searching.

This machine was growing on me very fast indeed. However, the same thought was going over and over in my head. This machine was £400 cheaper than the one I use and I just couldn't fault it. It is better balanced, has a lovely tone, and trigger pinpoint etc.



Controls



Trigger all metal/disc/pinpoint.

The only down side was that on the following day I would have to hand it over to its rightful owner, my dad!

During my hour-long search I found some small pieces of lead, a Roman "grot", and three buttons. However, it has to be said that most of that time had been spent familiarising myself with the detector's controls.

Second Outing

I met up with my dad on the field at 9am. I talked him through the function of the controls, which he understood straight away, and then he set off with the traditional roll-up hanging from the side of his mouth. Within a few minutes he called me over. He had found a large live shell from a Second World War aircraft. He commented that it was amazing we had missed this on our previous trips.

I returned to my own detector and continued searching. Signals were far and few between, as expected.

My dad then dug up a small hammered coin, probably of Elizabeth I. He said that it had given a good signal and was recovered at reasonable depth. It seemed that the detector was performing well, and running very smoothly indeed.

After an hour or so we swapped machines. I went to the top of the field and started my search. I dug two pieces of round iron, but the signal on these bits was short and choppy - not like a coin sound. Round or misshaped iron tends to fool most

machines, so this I found acceptable.

Then up came a lovely silver Roman coin, which I have not had time to identify. After that I was convinced the Black Night is a perfectly adequate machine for everyday searching.

Our search stopped at 1.30pm as we both had other commitments. Some

Gary's dad with aircraft cannon shell.



good finds had been made on a field that had been well searched over the years.

The following is the way that I found it best to set the detector up:-

- * set the toggle switch to normal
- * turn the discrimination to zero
- * adjust the sensitivity as high as you can without the machine becoming unstable.

There is a manual ground set-up pot under a blanking plug on the top of the box, but I recommend that only skilled users attempt to adjust this.

Although our best finds were not exactly the crown jewels, we really enjoyed our search and enjoying yourself is what detecting is all about.

During the day's search we noticed a person approaching. He introduced himself as a local chap who had been involved in detecting some years ago and was interested in our finds. He had a quick go with the Black Night and asked how much it cost. When I told him £200 he put in an order there and then, leaving his phone number.

Summary

The depth capabilities of this detector are very acceptable and it is without doubt on par with any other mid-range machine on the market today. It is simple to set up, has an excellent audio tone, is very smooth in operation, and provides good iron discrimination. I would say that it is worth every penny of its modest retail price of £200. **TH**