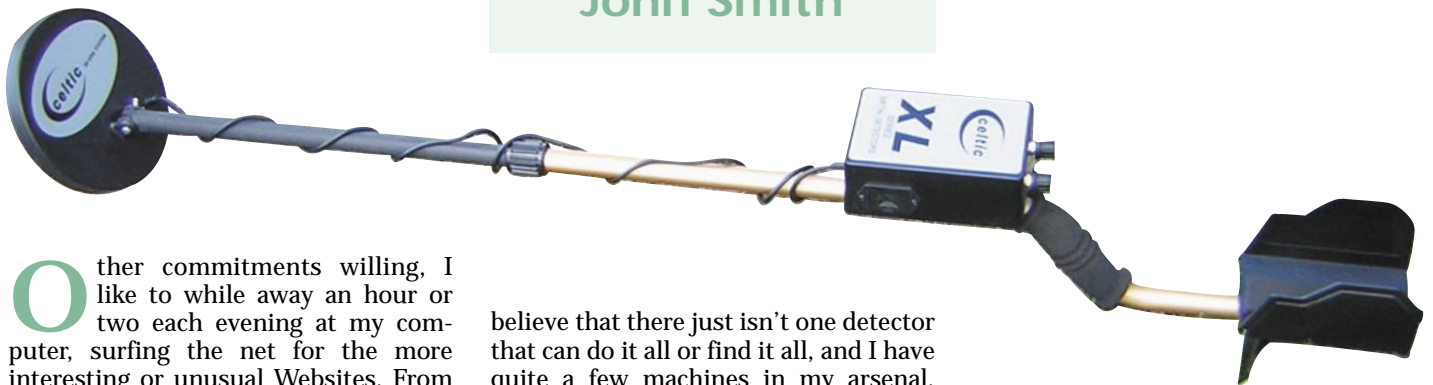


# Detector Field Test

## Celtic XL15

John Smith



Other commitments willing, I like to while away an hour or two each evening at my computer, surfing the net for the more interesting or unusual Websites. From the detectorist's point of view the Internet can be a goldmine, not only for map data and historical reference, but also for details of metal detectors that you do not normally see advertised within the pages of this magazine. In fact, there are some hardly-heard-of British detector manufacturers out there who produce interesting machines that are well-worth closer examination.

One of these manufacturers is the Welsh-based Celtic company, Website ([www.celticmd.co.uk](http://www.celticmd.co.uk)). They have three detectors in their range: the XL7 at £95 (non-motion TR, variable discrimination and volume), the XL9 at £119 (motion, silent search, variable discrimination), and the XL15 at £139 (motion, silent search, adjustable discrimination and sensitivity).

After looking at the specifications on the Website I decided to go for the top-of-the-range XL15; after all, at that price it was hardly going to break the bank, and I was interested to see how it would match up to the other detectors in my collection.

I am one of those people who

believe that there just isn't one detector that can do it all or find it all, and I have quite a few machines in my arsenal. You can thoroughly search an area with one machine, put it down in the hedge, and then search the same area with another detector - of different make and model - and find things that the first one has missed. And that applies whether the detector concerned costs £50 or £1,000. Perhaps this is due to different operating frequencies or something else, but from my many years of personal experience such is certainly the case. (Comments welcome from other readers).

### First Impressions

When I received the Celtic and opened the packaging, I found that the detector had been sent in two parts: a gold-coloured aluminium upper stem with small black control box; and a lower black plastic stem with attached search coil.

To put the detector together was just a case of loosening the locking collar, inserting one stem into the other, wrapping the coil cable around the stems, adjusting to length, and then tightening the collar.

The search coil is of the 2D type and

of 7in diameter; it is hard-wired to the control box. The detector has a foam rubber handgrip, and combined arm-rest and support stand.

Besides a quarter inch jackplug socket, the detector has just two rotary controls. The detector runs from just one PP3 9 volt battery, housed within a clip-in pod drawer. As always, alkaline batteries are recommended for both battery life and best performance.

The detector comes complete with a basic set of stereo headphones with volume controls, and a PP3 battery to get you started.

The instruction manual is short, but then the XL15 is a very simple detector to operate. The booklet includes some tips for beginners and the detectorists' Code of Conduct.

### Field Appraisal

The Celtic XL15 is, as already stated, a motion detector working on the "silent search" principle.

It is literally "switch on and go" with a rotary Sensitivity control on the left and a rotary On/Off Discrimination control on the right. Both control knobs are large and easy to operate, and both are marked in segments from 1 to 9.

Care should be taken in setting the Discrimination as the higher the setting the more chance of wanted items being rejected. I found the general ideal setting to be between 3 and 4. However, if you are searching a very quiet area of ground with very little iron contamination then Discrimination can be set down to 1. This is the "all metal" setting, and will give a little extra depth for the smaller/deeper targets, or coins buried at an angle.

Sensitivity should be set as high as





Battery compartment.

Locking collar.

Underside of control box.



conditions allow, although it is not always the highest settings that produce the best results. If you experience erratic signals from mineralised ground or interference from electric sources then lowering the sensitivity could prove beneficial. If the site you are searching is fairly free from junk and mineralisation, the Sensitivity control should be set between 8 and 9. For bad ground conditions, a setting of 5 to 7 should provide the best results.

At the time of writing this report it is late spring, with many of my normal sites out of bounds due to newly seeded crops. A friend and I spent some time travelling around the local countryside looking for any fields still in stubble or designated set-aside. We were very fortunate to find several such areas, which kept us busy for some weeks and gave me ample opportunity to try out the XL15.

As most of you will know, one of the problems with stubble - particularly where weeds have been allowed to grow up amongst it - is that it distances the search coil from the ground surface and limits possible depth. The 7in

search coil was therefore something of a mixed blessing. On the one hand a larger coil may have provided more depth to compensate for the stubble, on the other the small size did allow me to weave in and out of the stalks where they had thinned out or were soft.

Another aspect of the use of this detector came quickly to my attention. When approaching a metal target with the edge of the coil you get something of a forewarning in the form of a "ghost" signal that takes the form of a very hollow-sounding tone. It is only when the search coil is directly over the target that you get the full two-way tone (for non-ferrous) or a fuzzy broken up tone for iron (depending on the discrimination setting). It took me some time to get used to the "ghost" signals but they are, in effect, increasing the amount of ground coverage and are beneficial. It is actually unlike anything I have come across with any other detector.

The first field searched was heavily

iron contaminated and I did dig up a fair amount of iron. This was as a result of the large size or shape of the objects that came through on the discrimination settings of 3-4. Most detectors would experience problems with iron of this type and despite the terrain the Celtic was working well.

At the end of my search I had recovered about a dozen small non-ferrous objects from in amongst the iron. My finds included: a lead seal, a halfpenny, a lead washer, a spindle whorl, and an unusually-shaped copper token.

My next detecting session took me to a large wooded hill that the landowner had given me permission to search until his fields were ready later in the year.

I enjoy searching old footpaths and woodland if the opportunity arises, and this particular site made something of a change to my normal fields.

Many detectorists are put off from searching woodland simply from the ever present menace of spent shotgun cartridges. However, you can avoid the



An old penny and the remains of a purse.



A selection of field finds.



Unusual shaped token field find.



junk to some extent and maximise your chances by being selective as to where you search. I tend to look for clearings between trees that people in the past would have used for camping, picnics or other social events. I also look for trees that have been carved with initials, love hearts etc. You never know what might have been buried beneath the tree as a gesture of some kind.

In my chosen location I was proved correct. A tree carried initials and a carved heart, with the recent date of 1994 (proving that such traditions have carried down through hundreds of years). Although I have made some good finds around the base of such trees in the past, on this occasion it was only rusty beer bottle caps clearly identified by the XL15 with a "fuzzy" signal. My theory was also correct when I eventually came across a likely-looking clearing. The detector began to pick up targets with a good two-way signal in one direction, but an "iffy" broken signal in the other. These proved to come from tent pegs and I recovered 19 in all, proving that people had indeed camped in the clearing in the past. (I took the tent pegs home and gave them to a grateful friend). On this occasion the only coin loss that had resulted from their activities was a single 2p piece.

I then moved to another part of the wooded hill that had a number of overgrown craters that were the result of 19th century quarrying operations. Here the Celtic gave a good two-way signal next to a natural stone wall and a fallen tree. Moving the loose grass and topsoil away with my foot I found a single Victorian penny beneath which was the much-corroded remains of a leather purse. The penny may have been a sad loss to some poor soul, but I only wished she had been rich enough to lose a gold sovereign or two!

The next signal came from just a few feet away from the coin find spot and sounded a little "fuzzy" just as the iron bottle caps had done earlier. However, I was intrigued enough to dig it. I wasn't too far off the mark for it was indeed a bottle top but this time of the swivel top china variety. (If readers are old enough they may remember the old "Corona" soft drink or milk bottles that had the same mechanism. In fact, it is still used today if you are a fan of the Dutch Grolsch lager). The Celtic had actually registered the wire clip and hinge. What I wasn't expecting was that the cap was still attached to the bottle, embossed with the name "John Dye, Montrose". The bottle was full of moss but cleaned up well and now sits



Lady's Seiko watch and Micky Mouse badge.



Some of the beach found coins.

A selection of mundane beach finds.



"John Dye, Montrose" bottle.



on my window sill at home. Perhaps a bottle-collecting reader could inform me when swing stoppers first came into use, but I would guess this example dates from the 1920s?

### Sandy Beaches

After my woodland adventures I next took the XL15 to a local beach. This was where I found the detector to really excel and prove itself to be an excellent dry sand "coinshooter". The post-1982 1p and 2p pieces gave something of a "fuzzy" tone, particularly if they were old losses, but this was simply due to the iron core of our debased coinage. Other decimal denominations from the small 5ps through to the £1 coins gave a sharp two-way tone.

In four beach outings with the Celtic XL15 I found a total of 97 modern spendable coins, plus 20 "rusted-out" 1p and 2p coins (will banks still take these?). Out of the total I had recovered seven £1 coins and one £2 coin. Unfortunately, no rings were found during these outings but I did find a collectable Mickey Mouse badge and a still-working lady's quality Seiko watch. If I had kept up my searches it wouldn't have been too long before the detector had paid for itself!

### Conclusion

The Celtic XL15 is a straightforward switch-on-and-go detector that is suitable for beginners or as a back-up machine for professionals, at a price that won't break the bank. It excels as a coinshooter on dry sand beaches, footpaths etc and has some interesting performance characteristics as described above. Overall, I would say that it represents very good value for money.

### Specifications

**Model:** Celtic XL15

**Type:** Silent Search Motion Discriminator

**Manufacturer:** Celtic Metal Detectors, Bryn Golygfa, Dolgellau, Gwynedd, Wales, LL40 2UE. Tel: 01341 430249, Fax: 01341 430249.

**Email:** sales@celticmd.co.uk

**Web Site:** www.celticmd.co.uk

**Batteries:** 1 x PP3 9 volt (alkaline recommended)

**Battery Life:** 15-20 hours

**Search Coil:** 7in 2D (hard wired)

**Weight:** Lightweight at just over 1kg  
**Accessories:** Stereo headphones supplied

**Guarantee:** Two Years