

Detector Field Test

Garrett Ace 150

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Part 2



In the first part of this Field Test I concentrated on describing the Garrett Ace 150's controls and functions, as well as listing some of the results from bench tests carried out at home.

The bench test showed me that the detector's Graphic Target ID readings on the LCD screen were quite accurate, although some of the junk material will still filter through and sound off as good medium to strong Bell-Tone signals.

In the Coins search mode you may find some types of coins will be lost including some small bronze examples.

Going through the three search modes the ideal two for fieldwork would be All-Metal and Jewelry, and you can interact between the two.

I also noted that even when I had to turn the sensitivity down at home, waving the test objects in front of the search coil proved that the Garrett Ace 150 should provide some very good in ground results where depth is needed.

Field & Beach Appraisal

Naturally, as soon as I received the detector I was only too keen to get out and about with it.

The first place I headed to was some woodland. I was accompanied by a friend as he wanted to see how the machine performed before purchasing an Ace 250 (the next model up).

We wandered along some old footpaths and an even older road running through the centre of the woods. I set the sensitivity up to the third segment out of the four just to get an idea of the sounds coming from the detector.

I searched initially in All-Metal, which proved to be a mistake as the detector - although a silent search model - became very noisy with signals coming in from all sides of the path and then the road.

The majority of these signals were coming from surface to shallow trash and I found that a good sharp Bell-Tone would even sound off on soft drinks

tins that I dug up from being half submerged in the soft ground.

I therefore decided to switch to the Jewelry mode instead. Although the amount of surface trash registered became less, the detector nevertheless picked up various ring pulls and pull tabs which gave medium tone sounds but showed clearly on the screen as "Nickel" or "PTab". One medium to Bell Tone sounding object that showed up as "Iron" turned out to be a crown cap from a Bacardi Breezer bottle.

The only thing I found frustrating is that coins could come through as medium tones as well and show up as either Nickel or Ptab on the screen. So if you are searching an area that is likely to be contaminated with modern trash you are going to have to put up with digging some of it up.

This first search didn't produce any startling finds, but it did give me an insight as to how the detector works.

As well as signalling some of the pull tabs and ring pulls that littered the whole area, the Ace 150 did pick up one shotgun cartridge (which gave a medium tone and showed up as Nickel) and a 2p piece.

One interesting target came in the form of an old sauce jar lid. The detector gave off a good Bell-Tone in all three search modes and registered as "Coins" on screen. The reason was that the lid was copper lined.

The first search also produced one older coin made of bronze which registered as Ptab and gave a medium tone. It was found at a depth of around 5in and is nearly completely worn smooth. But when tilted at an angle in the sunlight what looks like an emperor's head can be seen. I am therefore not going to rule out my find being Roman bronze coin.

Beach Search

The second outing with the Ace 150 was made on the following day and I headed straight for my local sandy beach. At first I started searching in the All-Metal mode but soon switched to the Jewelry setting.

The detector handled itself pretty well, and was silent until a target was found. Having the Graphic Target ID is quite amazing as it takes a lot of hassle out of the mundane run-of-the-mill searching and I found that it was quite accurate. You have to become acquainted with how coins and other sought-after objects will come in on the LCD screen, but familiarisation shouldn't take too long.

In the Jewelry mode the majority of 1p and 2p iron-cored decimal coins were rejected but this wasn't a great loss for the £1 coins and £2 coins come in sharp as a razor with a Bell-Tone. During my search on the beach the Garrett found two £2 coins and five £1 coins with an easiness I have not seen before. I also found a good handful of silver change though including 10p's, 20p's, and a couple of 50p's so all and all the Garrett did well for coins over the dry sand. I didn't have a chance to try near the water mark as the tide was coming in and covering the area I had wanted to try. I have been told that the detector does not like the wet sand, but in time I will see for myself how it fares there. Sensitivity proved to be very good and the detector was very stable throughout.

There were no rings found on this occasion but I did feel confident enough to know that if there had been rings lying around the Garrett would have picked them out clearly.

The next outing, a few days later, took me to a newly cut stubble field. The field was to prove a good test area for the Garrett Ace 150 as it had power lines running down the centre and the stubble was lying cut at various lengths.

While searching the field I stuck to using the All-Metal mode and managed around most of the field with the sensitivity on full.

Searching proved to be enjoyable with the Garrett as the Graphic Target ID was an invaluable tool. It also proved to be very accurate, again showing me iron on the screen and with its very low dull audio tone.

With the Ace 150 showing its true potential with the very good target identification, it meant I could get around the field easily and cover more ground without the hiccups of too much unnecessary digging.

The length of the stubble didn't deter the detector from getting to the finds, some of which were at very good depths. I had found six coins by the end of the search, a musket ball, and two lead seals.

Working near the power lines did cause the detector to give some false signals on its full sensitivity setting, but when I turned this down a segment it became stable again and I still managed to find the targets.

One strange find that came up just after I had dug up a farthing of George III was what at first looked like a misshapen piece of lead. But when I removed some of the mud from it, I found a face staring back at me in the form of a head of a bearded man wearing a hat (perhaps part of a figurine).

A Worked Out Site

The following week I was back out again, this time going over well-trodden ground on a site that I have been detecting over for many years. It was one that I had thought was well and truly played out.

Three days before going to the actual site I had noticed its surrounding fields were all in short stubble, and thought them to be an excellent choice to put the Garrett over.

However, in the space of the three days the farmer had taken advantage of the good weather and didn't waste any time in ploughing them. Luckily, he was on hand when I got to the site and gave me permission to detect on the



Detecting over stubble.

main field as it had been ploughed the day before but had not yet been planted with anything.

The farmer warned me, though, that I should take care going towards the middle of the field as he had found it to be quite sticky and waterlogged.

Not reckoning on searching a ploughed field, I hadn't brought along my wellies and was only wearing an old pair of training shoes. However, I found the field was easier to negotiate than the first impressions given by the landowner.

The history of the field showed that at one time an old castle had stood there, but all trace of it had been wiped out back in the late 18th century. Over the years many others and I have searched this field in the hope of finding something big, as we all have those dreams of that elusive hoard of buried treasure.

Time has moved on, however, and although I have been back and forward over this field for the past 20 years, I have not found so much as a single hammered penny. There have been bits and pieces in the form of medieval artefacts, but nothing grand and certainly nothing of gold or silver.

When going over the ground searched many times before with other detectors, I found the Garrett adapted very well to the ploughed terrain and was silent and stable until it found targets.

The audio and target identification showed that the field still had lots of metal in it - the majority of which was iron, instantly recognisable by the dull low tones. But the Garrett did locate some non-ferrous targets as well.

Among the finds by the end of this were: a diamond-shaped military button showing a crown and the number 93 on it, a small worn hammered copper coin, a bronze foot from a bronze medieval pot, a piece of decorated lead (possibly medieval), two musket balls, and an object that looks like a wheel of some kind.

Other recoveries included pre-decimal coins that had been badly corroded from the burning of stubble over the years, a watch key, and a bronze weight.

Added to the above was a fair amount of non-ferrous scrap, and it just goes to prove that a field can never really be cleaned out regardless of how many times you search it.

The small hammered copper coin came up from a depth of 4in. Although it was found at a very awkward angle down a tractor wheel rut, it nevertheless gave good audio sound.

Conclusions

In the past I have seen many imported detectors come and go. Some have never made the grade because of the soil differences in Britain and the type of sites being searched. Even



An assortment of odds and ends.



An assortment of lead seals found in one outing.



Finds from a played out site.



A copper alloy finger ring showing as "Rings" on graphic ID.



The finds from the field next to the castle.



Iron ring that came through giving off a bell-tone.



Two pieces of coke that gave iffy signals and graphic ID anomalies.

Specifications

Model: Garrett Ace 150

Type: Computerised touch pad controlled silent search operation incorporating Garrett's own exclusive Graphic Target ID screen technology and multiple audio tone discrimination.

Manufacturer: Garrett Metal Detectors, 1881 W. State Street Garland, Texas 75042, USA.

UK Importers: Regton, 82 Clive-land Street, Birmingham, B19 3SN. Tel. 0121 359 2379. Fax. 0121 359 7975. Email: sales@regton.com

Weight: 2.7lb (1.2kg)

Frequency: 6.7kHz

Batteries: 4 AA (penlights) included. Alkalines always recommended. Battery life 20-40 hours depending on battery type.

Search Coil: PROformance 6.5in by 9in open elliptical coil.

Price: £169.00 (inc VAT)

Guarantee: Two years.

Accessories: Headphones, control box cover, carry bag and search coil covers are available as well as additional sizes of search coil.

Garrett have released some models here that did not achieve a following as they had been built and aimed for their own country of origin, the USA.

But now I can honestly say they have come up with a good detector that does adapt well to my own local terrain. Also, with the Ace 150, Garrett has introduced a good common sense detector that is within the budget of most of us due to its very sensible no nonsense price.

In the field tests I read about the Garrett Ace 150 on the Internet it has

been described as a "general purpose machine". However, it has the good build quality and performance that I feel can easily compete against its more expensive rivals.

The Ace 150 looks to me like a good piece of kit for coinshooting, dry sand hunting, and artefact hunting. I think I am going to achieve some good results with my one.

I will keep readers informed of how the Ace 150 performs over a number of other sites I have in mind, in a forthcoming Ace 150 update. **TH**