

Field Test Report

Viking VK10



Fig.1. The Viking VK10 assembled and ready to use.



Fig.2. The simple control panel of the VK10.



Fig.3. The 8 inch waterproof search coil with scuff cover fitted.

The people behind Viking have been making British metal detectors for as many years as I care to remember, going way back to the 1970s. The models were originally marketed under such names as Sol Invictus and Rimatron, before ending up with today's brand name.

Viking has always offered – whether you are a beginner to or a long-time follower of the hobby – good and well-made models that don't cost the earth.

I was recently shocked to hear of the sudden passing of Richard Forkasiewicz – Managing Director of Viking, whom I had known for many years. We had many chats over the phone and I had met him in person at a number of detecting rallies in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Richard and I would speak about the latest trends in metal detector technology and about the differences in the weather between England and where I live in Scotland. He was a very kind man and generously allowed me to have a look at various new models coming off the production line. Suffice to say he will be missed greatly within our great hobby! My belated thoughts go to his immediate family.

I still use what I regard to be one of Richard's best ever creations to this day, the Viking 5. Although not the most deep-seeking of detectors it will make finds in iron contaminated areas (river foreshores etc) where more expensive

models cannot be used. It certainly is a detector that has by far stood the test of time, and has been responsible for countless thousands of finds.

The Viking VK10 is a detector that I had wanted to look at for some time. It is a fully automatic motion model offering sensitivity and discrimination, with a true "switch on and go" set up.

Assembly

When you unpack the VK10 for the first time you will find the machine is in two parts with the search coil already attached to the bottom stem.

The control box is attached to the upper stem just above the rubber hand-grip with the adjustable arm cup and detector stand set to the rear.

The stem is in the standard "S" configuration, with the search coil hardwired with a locking collar and Pozi-lock spring clip for height adjustment.

The VK10 is provided with a search coil scuff cover, which should be fitted to underside of the coil before the detector is used in the field.

The control box is positioned within fingers' reach above the rubber hand grip. It is very small and compact, and made of toughened plastic. It only comprises two rotary controls with the standard quarter inch headphone socket positioned above in the middle. The speaker is located to the front underside of the control box and next to the battery housing.

The VK10, like other Viking models, operates from just one PP3 9 volt battery. You should be able to get 20 hours plus from a good alkaline, although you can – if you wish – use a good rechargeable instead.

The PP3 is positioned inside a battery drawer that slides in and out of the control box compartment.

The operating manual for the VK10 is a very simple affair with a total of eight pages. It offers the simplest of instructions as well as informative advice of how to search, faultfinding tips, and the Code of Conduct.

The colour scheme for the VK10 is black and green throughout. The lower



Fig.4. The battery housing and speaker.

stem is plastic while upper mainly metal. The 8 inch search coil is fully waterproof.

Controls & Functions

The VK10 has only two rotary controls that the user needs to set for searching; in other functions it is fully automatic in that it ground balances itself etc. The controls concerned are Sensitivity and Discrimination. The Sensitivity control is combined with an On/Off switch to power up the detector.

The detector does not have or need a threshold setting and works in silent search until a target signal is registered.

The discrimination control is marked from "0" to "10". At the "0" setting it will pick up all metals, but when you start adjusting up the scale the detector will start to knock out unwanted trash. Wanted targets (small hammered silver coins, thin-section gold rings etc) might also be rejected at the higher levels, so the advice is always to keep discrimination as low as conditions allow. The manual recommends a setting of "5" to begin with until you are a little more familiar with target rejection levels.

The Sensitivity control doesn't have a numbered scale on it, but shows clearly the higher scale markings. The higher you can manage to set the detector the deeper the target depths that can be achieved – ground conditions permitting.

Field Appraisal

Unfortunately, I received the VK10 in April just as the main detecting season had just ended, and the fields I normally visit were all under new crops.

However, although ploughed fields were not available, I did some paddocks and pasture sites to search.

The beach was another option for me to try; the warmer weather was coming in and that would mean more people visiting and more coin and jewellery losses.

In the grassy fields the VK10 was very simple and easy to use, and could be mastered by most people in seconds. On this particular site I found the ground conditions were good enough to have the sensitivity wound up all the way up.

The VK10 performed quite well and



Fig.5. A dry sand beach – an ideal location in which to use the VK10.



Fig.6. Ancient ship nail and well tap spout.



Fig.7. Possible iron crossbow bolt and key fragment.



Fig.8. Various lead seals, weights, and musket balls.

the discrimination was good enough to avoid most junk. However, it would pay a new owner to carry out some experiments with test objects (coins and iron fragments) before taking the detector out

on site. I settled on leaving the discrimination at "3" when searching pasture fields. This avoided most of the junk while still allowing the smaller wanted targets to come through.

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Fig.11. Barbados 5 cent piece.

CM



CM



CM

Fig.10. Modern losses found during the test.



CM

Fig.9. Run of the mill finds: coins, buttons, buckles, silver swagger stick top, and broken crucifix.

Even at the setting of "3" iron items will still filter through – especially the bigger misshapen pieces – and they will sound off as two-way signals.

I only had to reduce the sensitivity

considerably when one of the paddocks being searched was surrounded by electric fencing, which caused the VK10 to make a pulsed beeping sound continually.

In the pasture fields the VK10 managed to retrieve coins, lead seals, buttons, and musket balls – all sounding off with good two-way signals.

Some of the smaller pieces of iron would still give off a signal nearing a one-way bleep (as opposed to the two-way bleep for good targets).

As might be expected, some pieces of coke still came through fooling the detector's discrimination and sounding off as good targets.

Depths achieved were averaging out at the 5-6 inch mark on most of the small finds, with larger targets doubling that.

At this point I was allowed to search a field that had already been rolled and seeded (quite uncommon in my area).

A lot of iron came through initially, but mainly large items. One piece proved to be an ancient nail from an old sailing ship, and another perhaps proof of an old water well having been here. The latter took the form of a heavy iron spout, probably from the draw pump itself. (When I later consulted an old map, it showed that an ancient well had been situated near the find spot.)

One thing I would emphasise to owners, or potential owners, is to be aware that the speaker grill on the VK10 is quite open and as such could be exposed to the elements.

If, like me, you live in a part of the country where rain is prevalent, then you should take care to protect the speaker or any other exposed part of the detector. A friend of mine recently came up with a simple but effective idea of protecting most detector control boxes. This takes the form of the cheap elasticated shower caps that you can buy in most chemists or supermarkets.

Alternatively, just cover the speaker opening with insulation tape that can be removed in better weather conditions.

I next took the VK10 down to my local beach next on a beautiful sunny morning and headed straight for the dry sand and dunes.

Here the VK10 worked very well, and I could play around with the discrimination to good effect to determine target identity.

Post 1982 1ps and 2ps have a steel core, so if the discrimination is set to "3" or higher they will react with a broken or "iffy" sounding signal. However, with the discrimination backed off to "0"



Fig.12. Dirty and corroded modern coins.

they will react with the usual two-way response.

Not being an avid collector of these low denomination coins (banks don't seem to like too many of them being changed up either these days!) I worked with discrimination set at "0". However, when I received a two-way response I quickly adjusted up to "3" (no re-tuning necessary) to see if the signal was still two-way.

The signals that did I retrieved, the ones that didn't (remembering that I was simply after modern recent losses and I wouldn't use this ploy on farmland) I simply ignored and moved on to my next target.

The VK10's performance on the sand was clearly a resounding success as my search time was limited and I only covered a fairly small area. My search resulted in 22 coins, along with

other bits and pieces. The "better" coins (curpo-nickel) gave a good response with discrimination set up to "5" or more.

Conclusions

The VK10 is a very simple detector to use whether you are an old hand or raw novice. It can be employed on most inland sites, and is great fun for beach-combing in dry sand areas.

It has no complicated controls, no ground balancing is required, and with "silent search" does not need to be re-adjusted to threshold in changing conditions.

Operating on one PP3 battery it is economical to run as well.

In my opinion a good little machine that – although not top range in terms of depth or advanced facilities – will bring any user plenty of finds.

Specifications

Manufacturer: Viking Metal Detectors, 1 Angela Street, Mill Hill, Blackburn, Lancashire, UK, BB2 4DJ

Telephone: +44 (0)1254 55887

Email: viking@metaldetectors.co.uk

Model: Viking VK10

Type: Motion

Features: On/Off Sensitivity and adjustable Discrimination rotary controls.

Battery Life: 20 hours with a good alkaline battery

Battery Type: Single 9 volt PP3 or rechargeable equivalent

Headphones: Quarter inch socket provided for standard headphones

Search Coil: 8 inch Double D search coil, waterproof, (hardwired)

Weight: 3lbs

RRP Price: £135 (inc VAT)

Guarantee: Two Years

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