

THE WHITE'S CLASSIC IDX

by John Castle

THE White's Classic range will need no introduction to the British detectorist, being a popular and well-established part of our scene. For those looking for versatility in the medium price bracket, the Classics have few serious rivals. New to the range is the Classic IDX. Inevitable I suppose given the popularity of the previously introduced Classic ID. The two machines share many features, viz. variable discrimination and sensitivity, a target Id. meter, 9 1/2 inch concentric polo coil and an all-metal mode. Add to those a variable frequency control and a black sand switch and you have the Classic IDX, the new top of the Classic range!

Out of the Box

As the Classic ID was field tested fairly recently, it is not necessary to describe the external design of the Classic IDX in detail, so I'll just summarise:

Stem. Three-piece adjustable and easily dismantled, enabling the unit to fit into a largish holdall. Lazy S upper stem with foam handgrip and armrest which fits into one of three positions. A velcro strap holds it snugly to the forearm.

Meter. Liquid crystal display with targets marked above and below it. A located target will cause an audio response plus a rectangular cursor to appear in the display. The further to the right it appears, the more conductive the target is.

The meter functions thus in either the discriminate or all-metal mode.

Trigger. A toggle switch located beneath the meter and within easy reach of the index finger. Central position selects the discriminate mode, forward the all-metal one. Backwards also selects all-metal but is spring-loaded. It is used for momentary pinpointing or target audio comparison whilst hunting in the discriminate mode.

The control box is White's usual flat rectangle and it, plus the meter, trigger and upper stem form one indivisible unit. A standard jack socket can be found at the rear above the twin-latch hinged battery door.

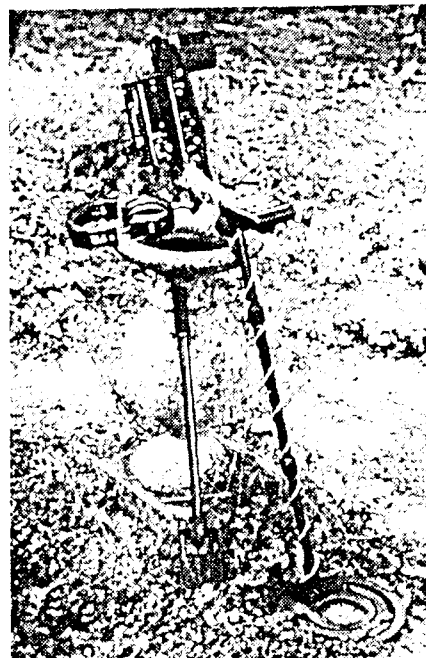
Controls on the box are discrimination, sensitivity and frequency adjust, all with initial, preset positions and a two-position toggle switch for normal or black sand positions.

There is also an adjustable ground cancel control inside the box, accessible by a removable rubber grommet. Do not touch this unless you know what you are doing and refer to the handbook if you do.

The coil is White's excellent 9 1/2 inch polo with other sizes as options. Batteries are eight AAs which fit into a supplied drop-in flat pack. A rechargeable kit is available. Construction is all-metal excepting the lower stem and coil and the overall finish is in glossy black with nomenclature, etc., in white and red. The unit is attractive, light, well balanced and very user-friendly. The excellent handbook is large A4 format and fully describes and illustrates all the functions of the unit. Study it!

A word about the coil

The 9 1/2 in. concentric used on the Classic IDX and most other White's units, including their flagship the Spectrum XLT, has proved itself to be one of the best on the market. Increasing its diameter above that of the



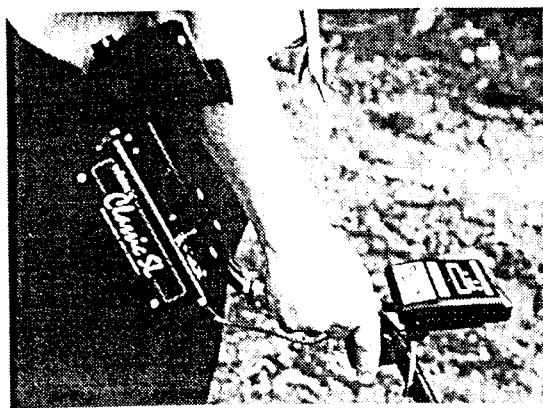
Neat, uncluttered meter. Cling film stops dirty hand-grip

"standard" 8 in. size, but without going too large has certainly paid dividends in terms of extra ground coverage and depth without losing sensitivity to small finds or running into increased ground cancelling problems.

In a recently published article an expert user tried to quantify this by carefully searching the same area with three different sized coils (all concentrics) and noting the results. He was not using a test patch, but searched a marked out area on a "natural" site. He started with the small coil and dug up all located targets, then repeated the exercise with the medium and finally the large coil. As he increased the coil size more finds (and junk) came to light, the deepest and oldest being found with the largest coil as one would expect. He noted that whilst the area covered by the largest coil was twice that of the medium one, the volumetric difference was seven times larger! Proof, if any were needed, that large coils are very useful.

But of course it's not as simple as that. Highly mineralised ground will have a more adverse effect on the larger coil, forcing the user to drastically reduce sensitivity or, more likely, change to a smaller coil.

The point of all this is that, whilst interesting in itself, White's 9 1/2 in. concentric offers considerable benefits in terms of ground coverage and depths without being over-large in terms of ground problems over and above that which we all normally



Well-designed ergonomics make for an attractive, well balanced unit. Note the trigger switch within easy reach of the index finger

experience. Improvements in electronic component stability and circuit design make their contribution too.

In Use

The unit arrived just too late for our Spring holiday so it had to wait for the Whitsun break. We didn't get the thunderstorms which other areas did, so we were able to complete our usual round of sites without any watery interruptions.

As this unit is very similar in performance to the Classic ID, I won't go into details, but I will repeat the tips I previously gave on how I used it.

On farm-type sites I prefer to search in all-metal, unless junk (invariably iron) is prolific. It's not that the IDX doesn't identify iron, it's just that I get tired of hearing it and stopping to look at the meter!

In the discriminate mode the odd click from ground minerals or near-rejected iron can be tolerated, but some deep small finds can give the same response. Not so in all-metal and very faint "whispers" thus should be investigated as they may well be too deep or small for the meter to classify properly. This won't happen too often as the meter is very responsive, but being prepared to dig those iffy whispers which cannot be classified by the discriminator is what determines the professional attitude, or otherwise, of the operator!

For stronger signals rely on the meter. Iron will cause it to react in one of two ways, viz. an "iron" reading or bouncing back and forth and not settling anywhere. In the latter case, switch to discriminate and ensure the variable control is set quite low. Total silence will obviate any digging. But you may still hear something "iffy" so further investigation will be necessary as you may have a good find near iron. Go back to all-metal, turn yourself 90 degrees and sweep the area again. If you still can't get a good clear signal dig anyway, you never know!

Park-type sites are usually far too infested with non-ferrous junk to search in all-metal so how I work there depends on how much time I have and what mood I'm in! If I don't want to dig surface and shallow junk, and accept the fact that shallow finds will be lost too, I check each signal in all-metal and only dig the faint ones. Even then

they might be very small and shallow things such as airgun pellets, so I cut a flap of turf, fold it back and check again. In the flap? Forget it. Still in the hole? Go for it!

Always check the meter. Large bits of iron can give a good audio, but if the meter reads iron you can safely forget it. See earlier for a "bouncing" meter.

If junk on a recreational area isn't too bad then simply set the discriminator to just into the "P" (pre-set) range, hunt in that mode and dig everything, unless the meter reads "iron". But this will also depend on the level of interference from the ground. I might choose to search in all-metal on a "clicky"



All you need for simple, versatile detecting

park or stay in discriminate with a reduced sensitivity setting. Whatever the site conditions are, the Classic IDX can be set to cope, and cope very well!

Sea beach detecting on dry sand was a doddle. We had to go down in the late evening to avoid the holiday day-trippers, but we didn't mind that. The 9 1/2 in. coil gave good ground coverage and I dug everything that gave an audio response unless the meter said "iron". Wet sand was fine too, provided the sensitivity control was kept at the "P" position. There was some chatter above that setting.

It has been said that black sand isn't a problem in this country, but there are many detector users in many parts of the country who know differently! This pest, very highly ironised ground, may not be the problem here that it is in some other countries but it is prevalent enough to render the black sand switch featured on the Classic IDX a useful feature. In all honesty, I can't say I've ever had a black sand problem in my area, the only time I

saw anything like it was years ago on some beaches in south-west Scotland, no Classic IDX then, more's the pity!

But users in other areas have reported the black sand switch to be very useful in their areas. One I remember was searching a salt peat marsh which was obviously also ironised. A very difficult site, but the black sand mode improved things greatly. Another one, in another area, found a small hampered. He searched the area around it, nothing. Then he tried again with the black sand mode on and found another! He left it on after that and did better than he usually does on that site. Both these were with the Classic III S/L which is basically the same as the IDX but lacks the meter.

The last control is the frequency adjuster. Useful if you're getting "crosstalk" from another detector, an especial problem at rallies. It can also be of help where some sort of outside interference causes problems. While it won't usually solve this completely, it will help to some extent. I also found it of some use on some types of bad ground, but this was pretty rare. The "P" position is the right one for nearly all sites where external interference is not present.

Back into the Box

Time to pack the Classic IDX and send it back to White's. A very nice unit, offering the kind of versatility I look for without complex controls or excess weight. Performance could not be faulted either, not at this price. Whilst, in common with all other detectors, the Classic IDX is not perfect it surely sets a standard which all others competing in the medium part of the market will have to live with, and they ain't gonna find that easy!

Beginners and advanced users alike will take to the Classic IDX. Simple when you want it to be, it grows with you as you gain experience whilst still retaining that basic simplicity which those who like to "switch on and go" prefer. The range of optional search coils extend its scope even further.

The White's Classic IDX is a motion, silent-search detector and is available now at **£449.00 inclusive of VAT from all good dealers nationwide.**

