

Field Test Report

Garrett EURO ACE

David Stuckey



Fig.1. The EURO ACE package.



Fig.2. The coil and scuff cover.



Fig.3. The console dust cover.

I was delighted when TH asked me if I would like to test one of Garrett's newly-launched machines – the Garrett EURO ACE. Having never had the opportunity to try any Garrett detectors in the past, I accepted this as an opportunity not to be missed.

When the EURO ACE arrived on my doorstep I opened it (Fig.1.) and laid out all the component parts on the floor. Assembling the machine seemed so straightforward I didn't even need to consult the manual. In a matter of minutes I was swinging the machine about to see how it felt. I was pretty surprised at just how light the EURO ACE felt compared to the machine I am currently using. I tried to weigh it on my wife's bathroom scales but it was too light to even register any response. So I ended up putting it on my kitchen scales, where I managed to get a reading of 1.35kg. I wasn't going to get arm ache with this one.

The basic kit comprises: the detector, a scuff cover for the 22 x 28cm Double-D search coil, headphones, and a dust cover for the detector's console (Figs.2 & 3.).

Once assembled, I then got down to studying the manual to see just what the new EURO ACE was all about. One thing that many detectorists find rather

daunting is to be confronted with an exhausting and lengthy manual. The EURO ACE manual ran to 96 pages, although I was rather relieved to find that it was actually in two languages, the English section only taking up the first half of the manual.

The Console

The console (Fig.4.) is well laid out and pretty straightforward. Below the LCD screen is a curved array of six yellow buttons in two levels. From left to right on the top level you have the Mode button, Sensitivity and then the Discrimination button.

The bottom level, left to right, is the ON/OFF button, Pinpoint button and then the Disc. Accept/Reject button.

The EURO ACE incorporates Garrett's exclusive Target ID technology and patented discrimination features. These features appear on the console screen as two scales. One allows you to see the detector's Discrimination setting (lower scale) and the other gives an analysis of the target (upper scale).

Also on the LCD screen are the Mode Setting indicator (left) and a Coin/Target



Fig.4. Close-up of console and LCD screen.

Depth Indicator (right). Immediately to the left of the Target Depth Indicator is the Battery Level Indicator. The Sensitivity Scale is located on the screen immediately above the Sensitivity button.

Mode Settings

There are five Mode settings: Zero, Coins, Relic, Custom and Jewellery. The Mode setting interacts with the Disc. Level indicator, which is shown as a line

of 12 black pixels across the centre of the screen (lower scale).

In "Zero" mode the entire line of pixels remain on display. In "Coin" mode four pixels on the left of the scale are eliminated plus one near the centre, to indicate foil elimination.

In "Relic" mode just two pixels on the left of the scale are eliminated, while in "Jewellery" mode three pixels are cancelled out.

The "Custom" mode allows the user to programme the machine to his/her preferred discrimination settings. The same number of pixels are cancelled out as in the "Coin" mode and you can set the Disc/Notch level by using the Disc. button on the top right layer of the button array. This action moves a cursor, situated just above the line of pixels, from left to right according to the level required. The cursor also doubles-up as the Target ID indicator (Upper Scale).

The pixel line is also used when the Pinpoint mode is activated. After pressing the Pinpoint button the machine should be swept sideways/back and forth at a consistent height above the target. All 12 pixels will be shown when the coil is directly above the detected target.

In the Field

The arrival of the EURO ACE in April presented me with a bit of a dilemma. Where was I going to take it? Most of our regular sites were well into crop and unavailable. After some scratching around, though, I did manage to get one farmer to allow me onto a field which had recently been drilled with beans. Being some distance away, I had to wait until I had an adequate amount of time available to visit.

I was, however, able to try the EURO ACE out at another site much nearer to home. This was a woodland site situated behind an old public house. The last time I had searched here, I had recovered a good quantity of Victorian coins and dress fittings. It would be interesting to see if the EURO ACE could locate any finds missed by my own machine.

Although I used the headphones that came supplied with the EURO ACE I soon found them very uncomfortable and, in my personal view, rather too flimsy for detecting purposes.

When I had last searched this woodland it was in December. The ground



Fig.5. Old die-cast toy horse.



Fig.6. Early 19th century lead bullet.

was relatively clear of weeds and undergrowth. Now, in April, everything was coming to life. Some areas, though, were still fairly clear of growth, so I stuck to these parts.

I started off in "Zero" mode, with no discrimination, as I wanted to hear the different sounds that the EURO ACE made when it detects ferrous and non-ferrous material. The ferrous signals came pretty soon.

The sound made for ferrous targets is little more than an abrupt "beep", quite distinctive. The manual, however, states that the EURO ACE gives a resounding "bell-tone" when a non-ferrous target is detected.

I tested the machine on various types of metal before I set out and the only way I can describe the "bell-tone" is that it reminded me of the sound you hear on an aeroplane when the pilot uses the public address system to make an announcement (only slightly higher pitched).

With the number of ferrous signals I was getting I was beginning to think that I'd done a pretty good job when I came here with my own machine on an earlier



Fig.7. Another die-cast toy before cleaning.



Fig.8. After cleaning, showing it to be a toy typewriter.

occasion. Soon, though, I had my first "bell-tone" signal.

Looking at the LCD screen I was curious to see what readings the EURO ACE was giving me.

At the top of the console, just above the LCD screen is a two-tone Target ID indicator, coloured red and green (red for ferrous and green for non-ferrous). In the non-ferrous section, in small type, are the words: "Thin" and "Thick". The cursor, which traverses from left to right above the pixel line, was lingering right under the word "Thick". So I had a target that was bulky and non-ferrous.

The Depth Indicator stated that the target was between 5cm and 10cm below the surface (as were most previous finds in these woods due to underlying gravel base).

I scraped away the surface soil and leaf mould with my boot and tried again with the search coil. The target had



Fig.9. Victorian silver-gilt flower brooch as found.



Fig.10. Flower brooch after cleaning.

Fig.11. The author testing the Garrett EURO ACE on a drilled field.



moved. It was difficult to see at first because of the pebbles that littered the soil. Soon, though, I spotted an irregular shape among these pebbles, so I didn't have to use the Pinpoint mode.

When I picked the object up I was amused to find that it was an old die-cast toy – horse minus its legs (Fig.5.)

These woods were no stranger to old toys. I found several old vintage die-cast toy cars here on previous occasions. Several minutes later I had a very similar signal, and assumed it was another toy.

This time, however, the EURO ACE had located an early 19th century lead bullet (Fig.6.).

I now changed up to the "Coin" mode, as there was quite an abundance of foil and other trash on this site. After 20 minutes or so of detecting, I found that this mode cut out all but the worst of the rubbish, although I still wasn't finding any coins! But I did get another

"bell-tone" signal, which resulted in a rather unusual find.

When I removed the find from the soil I was convinced that it was part of an old die-cast toy truck, or something like that (Fig.7.). When I later cleaned it up, I found that it was actually an old die-cast toy typewriter (Fig.8.). I've never seen one of these before, and hope that some reader might be able to tell me when these were popular? Were they part of a toy office set, or something similar?

After a well-deserved pint in the adjoining pub, I set out and continued the search of the woods. I had at least an hour left before returning home.

So far I was impressed by the EURO ACE's performance on a site that I thought I had cleaned out. The fact that I hadn't found any coins showed that I had done a pretty good job previously, but the EURO ACE was certainly showing that I had missed other things.

After about 15 minutes I had another good "bell-tone" signal. The LCD screen was showing that I'd found a non-ferrous target between 5cm and 10cm below the surface. The Target ID cursor had moved to the extreme right to show that it was a "Thick" object.

Scraping the soil and leaf mould away very carefully, I struggled to see anything.



Fig.12. An old brass curtain rail finial found at a depth of 8 inches.



Fig.15. My last find – a small Roman trumpet brooch.



Fig.13. Crudely formed medieval dagger chape.

Fig.14. Selection of old coins found in the field.



I switched on the pinpoint mode and swept the coil over the area. It soon became apparent that I'd moved the target away from the original spot. It was now several inches to the left.

Amongst the old dead leaves I found what I thought was a piece of dirty aluminium foil, although the EURO ACE told me it was something better.

As I cleaned off some of the dirt I realised that it was actually an old dress fitting or brooch (Fig.9.). When it was cleaned up later I was thrilled to find that it was an old Victorian silver and gilt filigree flower brooch (Fig.10.) with its pin still intact. I was certainly warming to the EURO ACE!

The following weekend was Easter Bank Holiday, so I now had the available time to try the EURO ACE out on the other site.

Despite the site having been drilled some time earlier, the lack of rain for weeks had retarded any germination so there was little, if any, growth. The soil was as flat as a pool table (Fig.11.).

From previous searches here I knew

that some areas of the field were quite "trashy", so I put the EURO ACE into "Relic" mode and set off.

As predicted, I soon came across loads of trash in the form of old aluminium foil. I've always assumed that these pieces were part of the lining of old sacks of seeds or fertiliser that had simply been discarded into the soil. In amongst this junk, however, I did get one good signal, which the Depth Indicator suggested was over 20cms deep.

I dug down to about 8 inches until I found the target, a large brass object, which I believe was a finial from an old curtain rail (Fig.12.). I felt rather guilty for digging such a large hole in the immacu-

lately drilled soil, so I took great care in refilling it and "drawing" drill lines back in the soil.

I experimented with the "Custom" mode and, using the Accept/Reject button, managed to find a setting that cut out most of the foil contamination. Although it worked, I was worried I would also miss some smaller non-ferrous targets. When I worked my way to a part of the field which suffered less contamination I reverted back to a low discrimination setting.

This paid off when the EURO ACE picked out a nice non-ferrous target. This turned out to be a small medieval dagger chape made from crudely folded bronze sheet (Fig.13.).

Over the next two hours I also unearthed several coins including two very worn hammered, a Roman silver *denarius*, a badly creased 17th century trade token, and two old pennies (Fig.14.).

As I worked my way back to the gate I had another non-ferrous signal, which the depth indicator suggested was near the surface. Expecting another shotgun cap, I was pleasantly surprised when it turned out to be a small Roman trumpet brooch (Fig.15.).

Verdict

I was suitably impressed with the EURO ACE's performance and I consider it to be well on par with my own more expensive machine. It may not be the seasoned detectorist's machine of choice but I would certainly recommend it if any old-timer was looking for an affordable back-up detector. If, however, you are a relative newcomer to the hobby this machine is an ideal candidate. TH