

Metal Detection

General Information

Metal detectors have been around for over 40 years. There are all types, made by different manufacturers. The more expensive equipment claim to detect different metal types, with some using headphones and experienced operators being able to know what objects are by the different tone (or noise) that the equipment makes.

How does it work?

The name gives the impression that it detects metal, well it can detect more than that! It actually works by transmitting an electro-magnetic wave into the ground. Anything that is conductive (which can be metal but can also be other things, e.g. cables, etc) will produce a secondary EM wave and this is what is detected by the equipment and it goes 'beep'.

What are its uses?

As well as amateurs searching for metal, Armed Forces Personnel and Police Services use them routinely for searching for buried material. This can vary from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Un-Exploded Ordnance (UXOs), landmines, anti-personnel mines or other items needing to be found.

What else do I need to know?

If you want to do some metal detection, make sure that you obtain the landowners permission first. 'Nighthawking', or illegal metal detection, is a growing problem and can be prosecuted under UK law.

If you suspect that you have found something of archaeological importance, then you need to determine the time when you found it and the place (most people have GPS on their phones these days), and contact the relevant authorities.

Further Information?

See the National Portable Antiquities Scheme website for expert contacts and expert information:

<http://finds.org.uk/>

See this BBC article for general information:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4966424.stm>

Interesting Facts

Some versions work underwater. Generally the bigger the detector 'head', the deeper the equipment can penetrate (although this also depends on the local site ground conditions).

