

Field Testing the 1270

by Joe Patrick

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In 1931, with four employees, Dr. Gerhard Fisher began producing the “Metaloscope” — the world’s first production metal detector. With that simple step, Fisher Research Laboratory and the Fisher metal detector, were ‘born.’ Throughout the 70 years since, Fisher Research Laboratory has been a world-leader and innovator in metal detector design and development. Long recognized for its high quality, high performance metal detectors, Fisher is currently celebrating its 70th year of business with the release of a new, special anniversary edition metal detector, appropriately named the model 1270. The new model 1270, is based, in part, on Fisher’s highly successful 1266-X, which has become a legend among detectorists and treasure hunters worldwide — especially relic hunters. When first introduced in the mid 1980s, the original Fisher 1260-X was the hottest, most innovative metal detector available and continued to be very successful for Fisher through its various improvements and refinements right up to the current 1266-X model. The new model 1270 keeps and builds on many of the innovative and proven features that have made the model 1265 and 1266 so very popular, but also makes use of new technology and electronic circuitry to advance the ‘science’ to a higher level of performance and versatility.

FEATURES

During Autumn of 1999, I had the opportunity and pleasure to field test Fisher’s



new 1236-X2 metal detector. This was Fisher’s first model to incorporate the ‘third derivative silencer mode’, which helps to eliminate excessive noise, ‘pops’ and ‘clicks’ when searching in trashy areas and over ‘hot,’ unevenly mineralized ground or areas containing many ‘hot rocks’ — such as coal cinders or iron-laden gravel (slag). I found the Silencer circuit to work extremely well and am happy to report that it is included as a user-selectable feature of the new model 1270! In addition to the Silencer function, the model 1270 has a few other features that enhance its performance and versatility. A new high-resolution iron discrimination mode — that enables you to “see through” iron trash like never before, and a precision ground balance adjustment for difficult soil conditions. The ability to operate either silent or with an audio threshold is also provided. The high resolution iron disc. mode and precision ground balance features can be very effective and productive for many users, but particularly so for relic hunters. The iron discrimination mode enables all-metal depth, with the ability to control the amount of small iron acceptance or rejection at will. In many of my past field tests for Fisher and other brands, I have stated that I feel the best design and placement for the mode/pinpointing

function is a ‘trigger’ switch activated by the user’s index finger. This design makes sense for both right and left handed operation, or for those who switch back and forth while detecting to give their arm a rest. After using scores of various metal detectors over the years, I have found no mode-change/pinpointing method better than the index-finger-operated trigger switch. Like the 1266-X, the new 1270 continues to use the trigger switch design . . . another ‘plus’ for Fisher and the 1270. Those familiar with the 1265-X and 1266-X will immediately recognize that the model 1270 is now enclosed in a slightly larger control housing — the same one that’s used for the CZ series. While this is necessitated by the additional controls and electronic circuitry of the 1270, I am not yet used to seeing this larger ‘box’ in my hand, nor the larger ‘feel’ of using it — having used a 1266-X on-and-off for the past few years, I miss and prefer the smaller, more-compact design of the 1266-X.

CONTROLS

The model 1270 is an 8.2 KHz ‘slow-motion’ metal detector configured with an 8-inch concentric coplanar Spider search coil. It uses a three-piece breakdown S-pole rod assembly with double-locking lower stem and weighs about 3.5 pounds. You may have noticed that

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the new 1270 operates at a slightly higher frequency (8.2 KHz) than the 1266-X's 4.8 KHz. This should improve its ability to detect low-conductivity targets better, such as gold, lead and brass. Powered by two, drop-in, 9-volt Alkaline batteries, the 1270 will operate for about 30-40 hours before replacements are needed. A Low Battery Alert L.E.D. automatically blinks when the batteries are nearly drained. The 1270 has three search modes: Normal Discrimination; Enhanced Iron Discrimination and All-Metal Ground Balanced search. The Normal Discrimination mode provides full-range discrimination, from iron through screwcaps. For sites where improved 'see through' in iron trash is needed, the high resolution Iron Disc. Mode can be used with very good results. Of course, for those who want to dig-it-all, or require a manual ground adjust, the All Metal Ground Adjust mode is the correct choice. The control panel of the 1270 has the following controls and functions: POWER ON/OFF VOLUME — OFF/ON switch; adjust knob for desired volume. NORMAL DISC. — Sets the normal range of discrimination from iron through screwcaps. ALL METAL GROUND ADJ. DISC. — For primary mode all-metal searching and ground balanced searching. IRON DISC. — Used in combination with the Iron ON/OFF switch to reject small iron targets. SENSITIVITY — Enables 'silent' or 'threshold' searching. Adjust knob for optimum target sensitivity. Full clockwise provides a low audio threshold. SILENCER ON/OFF — Switch ON for silent discrimination, OFF for standard discrimination. IRON ON/OFF — switch for iron disc. Mode, OFF for normal search mode. TRIGGER SWITCH — Three-position, spring-loaded trigger switch; center position for primary search mode, push for secondary search mode, pull for pinpoint.

FIELD TEST

Setting-up the 1270 for field use is easy, as it is a very 'user-friendly' metal detector. First, determine which primary

search mode you wish to operate in — Normal, Enhanced Iron or All Metal. For most park-type hunting, I used the Normal mode as my primary mode. For detecting relic sites or woods hunting, I usually used the Enhanced Iron mode, unless the site was very trashy. You can easily 'mix and match' modes as search conditions warrant and it was nice to have this flexibility when needed. Pushing the trigger switch forward will switch to the selected secondary operating mode, while pulling it will switch to the pinpointing mode. The switch is spring-loaded and automatically returns to its center (primary mode) position once released. One odd condition I noticed was that if I pulled and held

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the trigger switch (pinpoint), while still a few feet above the ground, I got a signal no matter where I approached the ground. It seemed as if the internal ground balance point was set way too positive. However, each time I pinpointed an actual target (pulling the trigger switch with the coil near the ground), it seemed to work just fine. The zero-motion pinpoint mode produces a pleasing, modulated, 512Hz audio tone. A built-in speaker and stereo headphone jack are provided. At a volume setting of 5-6, with sensitive headphones, the 1270 produces a very strong, positive, 'hit' on good targets. It has plenty of audio strength and even deep signals produced solid, very audible 'hits.' During the course of my field test, I searched several different sites including an old park, several wooded sites and an old group home site. The 1270 worked well at all of these and while I was quite satisfied with its performance on coins, my 'gut feeling' and intuition were, "This is an awesome relic machine!" At one site, I was finding numerous, small, old, metal buttons and

a few pieces of old costume jewelry in an area that I know has been well-searched. The 1270 was giving very positive and loud 'hits' on these too! Most of these targets were about six to nine inches deep. On most coins, I was surprised by how loud and 'solid' they sounded. When upon retrieval, I found them to be anywhere from 4-8 inches deep — and this was with the volume control set only halfway! The 1270 'hits' hard and there is no mistaking a good target. Junk usually tends to break up and is sporadic, while the 'good stuff' consistently produces a repeatable and steady audio sound.

CONCLUSION

Fisher quality and performance are well known among detectorists worldwide and their detectors are highly respected for their depth capability . . . the new model 1270 is no exception. With its enhanced versatility, performance and adaptability, it is destined to a quick rise to the top of the 'top performers' list of high-performance metal detectors. Although any coin or jewelry hunter would like and do well with a 1270, I think it will be the avid relic hunters who will ultimately embrace and totally appreciate the outstanding capability of the model 1270. I am confident that the Iron Disc. Mode, in particular, will directly contribute to many new relic finds — many of which will come from iron-laden, difficult-to-detect sites. Fisher's, 1260, 1265 and 1266-X metal detectors are all legends! I believe the model 1270 will soon be joining their ranks! The Fisher model 1270 retails for \$699.95 and comes with a lifetime warranty. Additional information can be obtained at: Fisher Research Laboratory, 200 W. Willmott Rd., Los Banos, CA 93635. TEL (209) 826-3292, FAX (209) 826-0416. Fisher's excellent website has a lot of product information available and now has detector operation manuals available online for users to view or print using Adobe's free Acrobat Reader, Fisher's Internet address is: www.fisherlab.com, E-mail: info@fisherlab.com.

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