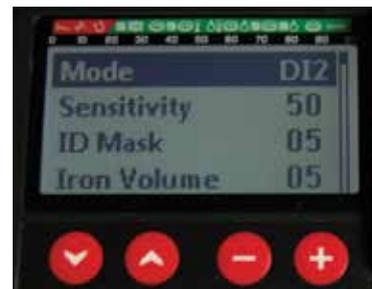




Left: Fig 1: The new Nokta Fors Relic
Below left: Fig 2: The main controls
Below right: Fig 3: Fors Relic menu screen



Nokta FORS Relic

Operating Principle: VLF
Operating Frequency: 19kHz
Search Modes: 6
Ground Balance: Auto and manual
Frequency Shift: Yes
Search coils: 11x7" and 5" waterproof DD
Weight: 1.8kg (3.9lbs) inc batteries and search coil
Length: 125-150cm extendable
Battery: 4 AA alkaline
Warranty: 2 years
Price: £629

The FORS Relic is a new machine from Turkish detector manufacturers Nokta, based on their popular FORS platform. Specifically geared towards searching for relics and with six search modes, a 19kHz operating frequency and two coils as standard, it is billed as 'The relic hunter's dream detector'. I couldn't wait to try it out!

On opening the box I was a little surprised by the large number of parts contained within. However, assembly was easily accomplished with the help of the clear instructions and diagrams provided in the manual and the whole thing took less than ten minutes in total.

Once assembled, the machine feels very solid and is well-balanced. The layout matches the other FORS machines, in that the main control box is mounted on the shaft behind the arm cup. There are further controls on the handgrip for Ground Balance, Pinpoint and LED torch, along with a second, smaller LCD screen. Power is supplied by four AA batteries which give around 30 hours of use. Also included are a pair of Phillips SHP1900 full-cup headphones.

Search Modes

The FORS Relic has six search modes:

General Search (GEN)

An All-Metal single tone mode with a Threshold tone and no Discrimination.

Discrimination 2 (D12)

A two-tone Discrimination mode for clean fields without much trash. It produces a low tone for iron and a single tone for all non-ferrous targets, which increases in pitch as the target nears the coil.

Discrimination 3 (D13)

A three-tone Discrimination mode designed for coin shooting, good for picking out high conductivity coins amongst different types of trash.

Deep Mode (DEP)

A slower, deeper version of D12, recommended especially for searching for relics. The deepest of all the Discrimination modes.

Swift Mode (SWT)

A two-tone Discrimination mode designed to get the best results in trashy areas. It offers slightly less depth than D12 but has faster target response and recovery speed.



Fig 4: Second LCD screen and GB button on handle



Fig 5: My first Celtic silver unit with the Fors Relic

the Relic to still be perfectly well behaved, so I increased it further. 80 proved to be a little too lively for this site but after a few more adjustments I settled at 71.

Around an hour later I had a very nice surprise. I could tell by the clear, sharp signal that this was something small. I scraped away the top couple of inches of soil with my boot, expecting it to be very shallow, but the target still remained buried. It was deeper than I had expected, around 6" down, and I was thrilled to see that I had uncovered an Iron Age coin, a South Ferriby type silver unit of the Corieltavi tribe.

My disappointment at the broken state of the coin was offset by the excitement of what this machine might be capable of. I was really impressed with the quality of the signal generated from such a small target (0.5g) at this depth.

My confidence in the FORS Relic was beginning to soar. Before the day was out, another Celtic silver had fallen to the 11" x 7" coil, this time it was a tiny silver half unit (13mm/0.5g) and in excellent condition. Again it was around 6" deep and the clarity of the signal left no doubt whatsoever that there was good target lurking below the surface. First time out with a new machine and two Celtic silver in the bag, I was hooked.

Next stop was a completely new field, so I had no idea what to expect. I started with DI2 mode and the automatic Ground Balance settled at 46. After a little experimentation with the settings I dropped the ID mask to

03, Tone Break to 7 and the iMask to 1. Sensitivity was stable at 75 with just the occasional crackle from the ground. In the quieter areas I used DEP mode (standard except for Sensitivity at 75) that gives a wider response on targets making them difficult to miss.

Finds from the quiet area included hammered silver penny of Edward I at 9" and a Roman umbonate brooch at 10". Outside of the quiet area I switched back to DI2, which gives better target separation and allows a quicker sweep, meaning more ground coverage. The finds are shown in fig 7 and 8. The tiny item top right is a fragment of a 4th century silver siliqua, this machine really does lock on to the small silver.

A week later the FORS Relic and I flew out to attend a detecting rally in Croatia. The Relic breaks down into short sections and I had no problem fitting it into my small suitcase.

We were working with local archaeologists, surveying the site of a 4th century Christian church. The detectorists were tasked with digging and bagging all targets, both ferrous and non-ferrous, but it soon became apparent by the sheer number of small nails present that it would be impossible to recover every target in the time available.

I used the faster SWT mode here, and by dropping the Tone Break to 13 I was able to set the Relic up in such a way that the nails all came through with a smooth low tone but larger ferrous targets, or those of a different shape would break through with a high tone, as would coins that were being partially masked by the nails.

This worked well and I was soon finding plenty of Roman coins (I lost

count after 20) along with some iron building fittings and Roman hobnails. Unfortunately I have no photographs of my discoveries as all finds here were bagged uncleaned and left on the findspot for the archaeological team to plot with GPS. Nevertheless, it was another enjoyable day using the Nokta.

Pinpoint

The Pinpoint function is activated by holding in the Pinpoint button on the underside of the handle. As the coil moves from clean ground towards a buried target the Threshold will rise and numbers will be displayed on the handle LCD. These numbers show the estimated depth (based on a coin size target) and can be set to either inches or cm using the main menu. When the Threshold is at its highest, and the numbers at their lowest, the target will be directly below the centre of the coil.

Whilst running the FORS Relic in DI2 and SWT mode I never needed to use this feature, the signals are very positive and accurate location is easily achieved with a cross-sweep over the target. I did find it useful, however, for the large, deep targets when searching in the slower DEP or GEN. In these situations it is especially important to pinpoint precisely before digging a large hole.

5" Coil

Included with this machine is 5" circular DD coil and spare lower stem. This smaller coil is especially useful for sites where there is a high density of metal, or for areas that just are not physically accessible to a larger coil (between rocks, vegetation etc.). I took the 5" coil to a site where some medieval buildings once stood. As well as being blanketed by thousands of iron nails, this field also contained a huge amount of old lead, but I have found very nice medieval coins over the years.

A short, two-hour, search did not



Above: Fig 9: Searching amongst the church ruins in Croatia

Below left: Fig 10: The two coils supplied, 5" and 11"x7"

Below right: Fig 11: 167 junk targets from the last day.





throw up any treasures but the small coil did pull up over 30 non-ferrous pieces. Most of these targets 10mm – 20mm in size, although there were two that were much larger 80mm-100mm. I knew that the 5" coil combined with SWT mode would winkle out the small stuff, but I had not expected anything of this size to still be hiding. A second visit yielded better results, with me finding two hammered silver coins and a silver collar stud.

Above: Fig 12: Better finds from amongst the junk
Above right: 13: Late Medieval/Tudor spindle whorl found at 12"

By the end of testing I had really grown to like the FORS Relic. **On my final outing, using a combination of DI2 and DEP modes with the larger coil I dug 183 non-ferrous targets and not one single piece of iron.** 167 were assorted junk but amongst the 'keepers' were two more hammered silver coins and three small Roman bronzes. The deepest good target of the day was a decorated lead spindle whorl that came from 12" down using DEP.

Overall I found the FORS Relic very easy to get on with. The Discrimination



was very reliable and iron targets can be left in the ground with certainty, whilst the sharpness of DI2 and SWT modes inspire confidence to search at speed without missing the even the tiniest target. Throw in the extra depth of the DEP and GEN modes, along with the choice of two coils, and you have a very versatile machine capable of finding relics of all sizes in almost any situation. I've really enjoyed my time with this machine and, as you can see, I have some nice souvenirs of our adventures together. ●

Nokta FORS Relic test results

(Scores out of ten based on price category)

- Ergonomics (weight/balance): 8**
- Simplicity/User Friendliness: 8**
- Build quality: 8**
- Weather resistance: 7**
- Discrimination Performance: 9**
- Overall detection Performance: 8**
- Value for money (£629): 9**

The Searcher Rating



Competition: Win a Nokta FORS Relic worth £629

Our thanks go to Nokta for supplying a FORS Relic, worth £629, to give away as a prize. For your chance to win just answer this question **What modes did Adam use on his final outing?** Just fill in the coupon below (no photocopies allowed unless you are a current subscriber and your number is required) and send it to us at the **Fors Relic Competition, the searcher**, 17 Down Road, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2PX. Closing date for all entries by 31 July together with your name, address and contact number. Good luck!

What modes did Adam use on his final outing?

.....

Name:

Address:

.....Postcode:.....

Telephone number:

Subscriber # (if required):

App subscribers ONLY simply either do a 'screen grab' of the page, print it out and post the coupon OR attach the screen grab to an email and send it to info@thesearcher.co.uk.



Competition Rules: This competition is open to all readers except employees of **the searcher** (which includes all regular contributors and their families) and our printers and distributors: Warners Group PLC. Only one entry is permitted per person. Entries will be accepted by POST only addressed to: FORS Relic Competition, **the searcher**, 17 Down Road, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2PX. App subscribers ONLY by email or post. To be valid, entries need to be received on or before 31 July. The draw will take place soon after and the winners will be notified by telephone (if possible). There is no cash or other alternative to the prizes stated and the prizes is not transferable and no part or parts of the prize may be substituted for other benefits, items or additions. The judges decision is final and binding. No correspondence will be entered into. No responsibility can be accepted for entries lost, delayed or damaged in the post.