

Detector Field Test

XP G-Maxx & Gold Maxx

Gary

Before I start my report I would like to thank Alain from XP Detectors for taking time out from his busy schedule to visit us in England. Over the two short days we detected together I learnt a great deal and benefited from his extensive knowledge.

XP detectors have sold over 5,000 machines in France, Spain and Italy. Having met the owner of the company, I can say that this is a man who is a perfectionist and second best is not an option for him. There are five detectors in the XP range but for this test the two models covered are the G-Maxx and the Gold Maxx. These two detectors look exactly the same and have identical control panels. The difference is that the G-Maxx runs at 4.6kHz, while the Gold Maxx operates at 18kHz.

Any well established detectorist knows that the frequencies are the key to specific targets. For example, 4.6kHz will detect very deep on large targets such as hoards and big individual items. It will, of course, still detect smaller targets very well, but not so well as an 18kHz machine that will be razor sharp on small Roman and hammered coins, while still providing excellent depth and discrimination.

Controls

The control box is very light and can be either stem or hip mounted. The detectors come with top quality hip mount bags.

The controls, from top left of the fascia panel to the right, are as detailed below.

1. Quarter inch headphone socket.
2. Two/three tone toggle switch.

When set in the two-tone position the detector will give a low tone for iron and a high tone for any other non-ferrous target. The clever part is that there is an iron tone control, which can be adjusted by the operator to make the sound as loud or as quiet as you wish. It is possible to turn the iron control to zero volume or just a whisper to suit your preference. This will not affect the volume of the other two tones. In the three-tone position the discrimination is turned fully anti-clockwise. This places the machine in the all metal mode where



all types of metal are detected, giving a low tone for iron, a middle tone for foil or small coins, and a high tone for larger objects.

3. Rotary discrimination and multi-tone select control. With the discrimination switched on the tone feature will be de-activated and the machine will operate in a mono-tone only, rejecting iron at around level "4" on the decal.

4. Three stage silencer switch. The silencer switch acts as a filter. Set at "0" position it may be possible to hear some ground chatter at high sensitivity levels. By switching to number "1" it starts to filter the noise level, while at position "2" it continues to filter without com-

promising performance. In use, I found that position "1" was adequate but this will vary according to the operators personal preferences.

5. Ground/hot rock reject control. The ground cancel has a pre-set position for beginners, but more experienced detectorists can use this feature to eliminate troublesome hot rocks while at the same time fine tuning the ground rejection; this will add extra performance in certain soil conditions.

Coils

The XP standard coil is a 9in 2D widescan, but an optional 11in and an elliptical coil are also available. All the coils are very well constructed and are extremely light. The coil cable is slightly thicker than that used on most machines. Alain explained this is because the cable has double shielding for added strength, together with military specification connectors that are very expensive to purchase.

Field Test

I collected Alain from High Wycombe train station and while we chatted over a meal I mentioned to him that the Weekend Wanderers Club had a dig organised for the following day, which was a Sunday. I said that this would be an ideal location to compare his detectors with other detectors that would be being used during the dig. This suggestion appealed to him and so



Hip mount bag

the next morning we made the trip to South Warnborough in Hampshire.

After a very short time trying to search in heavy stubble we returned to the car and started chatting to other detectorists. Alain soon had a small crowd gathered around him, and demonstrated some of the machine's iron rejection capabilities. He put some pieces of iron scrap on the ground and placed a coin next to them; he then invited everyone to try to detect the coin with their own machines.

Some "nearly" found the coin but the XP Gold Maxx found it at least 6in above the target with a good clear sound.

He then put a tiny gold earring underneath a 1in thick ceramic tile and again repeated the test. The majority of the other detectors failed this further test but the Gold Maxx gave a great signal. We carried out several further tests during that afternoon and everyone who participated was impressed. However, the day was going fast and I really wanted to try this machine on one of my favourite fields.

I suggested to Alain that perhaps we should head for home and get an hour's searching in on this field before we lost the light. The site I wanted to test the detector on was a small area on a large field that is very heavily iron contaminated. Lots of interesting finds have been made over the 10 years I have been searching on it, and I had given this particular patch a good working over some days before with an Explorer and my trusty Lobo; I therefore knew finds would be scarce and it was going to be a real test for this machine.

Both of us were using identical Gold Maxxs, mine having been set by Alain to the same as that he was using. We searched approximately 5m apart so that the machines did not interfere with each other.

I caught sight of him digging something from the ground and then he walked across to me saying "I have just found a *sestertius*. Are you sure you have been over this area?"

"Lucky find" I replied.

Two minutes later he shouted "Button".

Meanwhile I found a small Roman coin and a large piece of round iron. With Alain's experience and knowledge of his machine he was running circles around me. He called me over to listen to a signal. I tried but only heard a one-



The range of coils available with the XP G-Maxx and Gold Maxx.

way bleep and a poor broken signal in the other direction. I suggested to him that I thought the target was iron.

"No" he replied, "not with my machine, it can be a target next to a piece of iron". He explained that this was a feature of his machines and you should never ignore such a signal. Not convinced, I dug the hole before he had a chance to and retrieved a small lump of bronze. I then checked the hole again and sure enough there was a large iron nail in the hole.

After this short lesson my finds rate started to go up. In fact, I found a strange hammered coin and some bronze Roman coins, a sixpence and several other non-ferrous targets including two coke cans at over 1ft deep. Admittedly, I did dig some misshaped iron, but this was acceptable as we had the machines set on the edge of their discrimination purposely to find targets lying close to iron. We had had about one hour of daylight to search in and so we had to call it a day at this stage.

This test was written only having used the Gold Maxx for around four hours in total. I have not had time to test the G-Maxx but Alain kindly left me both machines to carry out more thorough tests over this winter.

Since then I have continued to use the Gold Maxx, and on various locations I have encountered some problems with large square pieces of iron. This concerned me a little because it broke



The military style connector

through the discrimination even at maximum setting. This is where beginners may have a problem in the early days of learning how to use this machine. There is always a trade off when finding good targets close to iron, and you may dig a few more unwanted targets.

I mentioned this to my detecting partner Barry who suggested we sat down and thought this problem through logically. We tried everything to reject the iron and then I hit on an idea. I decided rather than try to reject it, it might be better to accept it and then use the tones to identify whether to dig or not.

After several different experiments we found that setting the iron level at the 12 o'clock position worked well giving a louder tone than that Alain had told me to use. When searching in all metal and hearing all the low tones, the higher tones shone out like a light. I found three nice Roman bronze coins - all in-between pieces of iron.

Going back to trade offs, the trade off in this particular instance is how much you want to investigate your targets. Some large iron would break through the low tone into the higher tone (a low tone and a "spitty" high tone would be heard together), but they would sound on top of each other. A coin next to iron will give a low tone next to the high or slightly overlapping; that's where it's up to the user whether to dig or not.

The G-Maxx's and the Gold Maxx's audio reacted exactly the same way in this test. Recently, I tried the G-Maxx (4.6kHz) on a pasture meadow. It was the usual story with this site: it has been detected on lots of time before, and was now not producing many finds etc. The depth was really good and, in fact, my Sovereign is now up for sale. I didn't dig a single piece of iron and I could run the sensitivity at almost maximum with no false signals.

One thing I have completely forgotten to mention is that this machine has no pinpoint function. You simply criss-cross the target and its dead centre every time. Although this detector will take time to learn to use, I score it at 9 out of 10.

XP Metal Detectors do not sell direct to the public. You can visit the XP Metal Detectors Web site at www.xpmetaldetectors.com and for further information contact Garys Detecting tel. 07785 576236 or visit his website www.garysdetecting.co.uk/

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