

# Detector Field Test

## Maplins 3010/GC-1010

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I was recently asked if I would be interested in conducting a field test. I find it always a delight to do these, as you get a good idea of what's on the market, and what the capabilities of any new machines are. Bryan at **Treasure Hunting** said that the detector concerned was an interesting little machine of Chinese manufacture, that was currently being retailed by Maplins Electronics outlets.

I asked what the price was, to be shocked and amused that my latest purchase cost nearly 20 times as much as the machine to be field tested. However, Bryan warned me that despite its price, rumours were starting to circulate that this detector was something special.

When I eventually received the parcel, I couldn't wait to see what was inside. After finally unpacking the machine, my first surprise was the build quality.... It was really very good and well beyond what I had been expecting. In a society where "expensive" does not always mean good quality, "inexpensive", seems never to be given much of a chance. Was I letting the price influence all my expectations? Well, yes I guess I was.

Within three minutes the machine was ready to go. However a quick glance through the user's manual was required. This was very practical and straightforward. I suspect that an experienced detectorist somewhere had originally drafted it. Despite some slight grammatical variations/spellings created by its translation it was straightforward and practical. I believe the machine is aimed at the junior market, and therefore I decided to ask my daughter Claudia to help me try it out. We tested it first on an old Georgian silver spoon that I found some weeks ago. Without much reference to the manual, and being a fairly experienced detectorist it was possible for me to set up and go. So to begin with, this is what I did. I wanted to see how comfortable the machine was, how my daughter would cope with it, and how its target ID performed.

Most children are awkward when tasked and checked, so I set the

detector up and left her alone. Returning back in 10 minutes I was slightly shocked to see four holes in the newly cut lawn - but at least they were neat holes! Knowing what detecting is about, Claudia had found the targets and then decided to check them out. There, in her hand, were four grubby decimal coins. That's pretty good going in my book.

At this stage I photographed her posing with the detector and the spoon. After repairing the lawn damage, I checked the settings; we had used the machine at maximum sensitivity and volume. It was while testing the unit over some Claudian coins that I noticed two factors that astounded me. Firstly there was a depth gauge on the LCD meter; secondly, no matter at which speed I passed the search head over a target it almost always registered. (An onlooker would have been forgiven if they had thought I was practising a golf swing!). The depth LCD display does indeed function accurately, with various types of buried coins registering different readings.

So far, price alone was no indicator

*Claudia with detector and spoon.*



at all relating to build quality and performance. When passed over the coins on the surface a small target indicator arrow positions itself beneath a selection of illustrations. Two pence coins register below the illustration of a 5 cents coin. Checking the lawn revealed another "5 cents target" buried 6in down, and - you guessed it - it was another 2p.

What else was this machine capable of? So far, it had functioned well on one setting on grassed compact clay - the conditions, sadly, of my back garden lawn. What about the real tests: stubble, different soil varieties, and my favourite - the rich dark organic soil, infested with iron on our major Roman site area?

Basically, an experienced adult can assemble this machine and be detecting competently with it in five minutes. Children may need some assistance in construction, dependent on their age.

As regards setting up, the machine functions quite well just by switching the power on and then you can detect. From after the point of unpacking, assembling, and adding batteries this detector can be categorised in the "turn on and go" class.

For the more seasoned detectorist, though, it offers a whole host of other function settings and combinations. Some of these are only be found on much more expensive machines. So far this machine was, in my opinion, little short of incredible. Coins were recovered from my lawn to a maximum depth of 8in. A brief air test revealed a Victorian coin still giving a signal at 8in (on maximum sensitivity and volume). Claudia's verdict so far (who incidentally is six) was "It's great fun, Daddy, finding coins, and it's not heavy at all."

Perhaps my assessment of "aimed at the junior market" could be a little off. Some adults new to the hobby would benefit from acquiring one of these detectors, and even experienced users could do worse than to own one as a back up machine.

All of the other members of the Pastfinders knew that I was testing this machine, and showed interest. Therefore, as soon as I had reached this point

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I phoned them up to let them know. A typical call was along the lines of: "Hi Tony you're not going to believe this but.....". There were non-believers, of course, but they came round to see for themselves.

At this stage it is probably a good idea to assess the detector itself.

### Features

**LCD Display** This indicates probable type of target metal with an arrow pointer. The depth, Disc/Notch range, sensitivity level, operating mode and, importantly, Low Battery indication are all included.

**Notch** Assists along with the "Disc" range in the rejection of particular forms of junk metal.

**Super Slow Sweep Identification** Allows the operator to detect extremely slowly, if he so wishes.

**Headphone Jackplug Socket** For the recommended use of headphones. It is of the standard 3.5mm type.

**Waterproof Search Coil** Allows the search head to be submerged underwater.



*Ernie takes a turn.*

**Power Supply** This detector is powered by two 9-volt PP3 batteries.

### Operation

When you slide the power switch to ON, all the symbols will appear on the LCD screen. Then the machine will

emit low, medium and high audio tones as it calibrates itself. After about two seconds the machine enters standby mode, awaiting your modifications if desired.

**Operating In All Metal** This allows all types of metals (ferrous and non-ferrous) within range to be registered, and create an audio tone.

When in this mode of operation "Sensitivity" remains functional, but "Disc" and "Notch" are negated and do not function.

**Operating In Disc/Notch** This function allows the user to discriminate against certain types of metals. The target range is adjustable on the LCD screen by a "Max-Min" slider. With the "Notch" operation you are able to select desired target metals, via the "Up-Down" slider key. When making these adjustments it is advisable to have a selection of non-ferrous and ferrous sample targets so that you can assess just what you are discriminating against or selecting.

**Sensitivity** - Setting the sensitivity level is a simple operation to carry out. It should be set as high as site conditions allow. It is again adjusted by an "Up-Down" slider.

**LCD Displays** As this is a motion machine if you stop searching for five seconds or more in the vicinity or over a target the indicator will disappear. It returns once motion has commenced again. Concerning the icons that the arrow may point to, please remember that these only serve as suggestions as to target identity. Above these icons are markings for the "Gold Range" and the



“Silver Range”, which are again useful but only indicators of potential target identity.

**Audio Tones** When the detector is set to “All Metal” mode it will sound only a single tone for all types of metal. Setting the machine to “Disc” or “Notch” will create a unique audio identification sound for each metal type. A low tone would be heard for gold, a medium tone for aluminium, zinc or copper, and a high tone for bronze or silver.

I have tested this and, true to the manual, the description of tones allocated for metal types is as described.

As stated before, this is a simple-to-operate detector, therefore I have not digressed along complicated descriptions of its functions. I have tried to keep my explanations as simple as possible, and just describe what this great little machine has to offer and what it can do. The manual supplied with it is fully descriptive in a simplified manner, and is therefore marvellous for a newcomer or junior detectorist.

After the experiments in my back garden, it was now time for the real test on various soil conditions.



*Antoninianus of Otacilia Severa found by Ernie.*

We first tested the machine on stubble and compacted clay soil, where Ernie - come his turn to try it - found the marvellous *antoninianus* of Otacilia Severa. While on this field we took the opportunity to photograph the general format of the machine and its controls.

Other terrains tested included meadowland, a small available area of a former Roman settlement, and finally the chalk soil of a local slope. In all of these areas the machine functioned adequately to very well. The only problem area was the iron-infested soil of the Roman site. This did require some fine-tuning of the sensitivity. However, once stabilised the detector worked

fine, and when I say “fine” I mean it. Using this detector and searching alongside my colleagues I found a total of nine Roman coins, ranging in depth from on the surface to about 7in down.

Seven inches seemed to be about the maximum depth I could get on coin-sized objects in all soil types, but that’s certainly nothing to complain about. Other recoveries ranged from horseshoes (when experimenting with the all metal mode), to Georgian coins, buttons, and a whole host of other finds.

### Verdict

I must apologise to the seasoned detectorist out there if my description of this detector’s operation appears over-simplistic. However, I really did find it simple to assemble and operate as described above. For its recommended retail price, which is only about £70, I would say that it is brilliant. Despite the price, the build quality is good and it is just the right type of low budget detector to encourage the furthering of interest in our hobby in the UK. Available from Maplin stores. Sales line 0870 264 6000. Website [www.maplin.co.uk](http://www.maplin.co.uk) **TH**