XP Gmaxx 2

Spec sheet	
Operating Principle:	VLF induction balance
Frequency:	4.6 KHz
Standard Search coils:	Waterproof 9" carbon-fibre (22.5cm)
Weight:	1.453kg
Battery type/life:	8 X AA Alkaline -50 hours. (Rechargeable NiMh optional.)
Warranty:	2 years
RRP:	£775.00 incl. coil cover, control box cover/hipmount bag & backphones

The Gmaxx 2 is one of the top selling metal detectors in mainland Europe, yet here in the UK you rarely see them being used…so what is it that the Europeans know that has obviously passed us by?

The detector is the low-frequency version of XP's hugely successful Goldmaxx Power (GMP). The GMP operates at a frequency of 18kHz, making it sensitive to thin section hammered coins, and very popular with UK detectorists whereas the Gmaxx 2 is a low-frequency detector, operating at 4.6kHz, giving it the ability to penetrate deeper into the ground on larger higher conductive objects. The extra depth has made this detector very popular with European militaria hunters, scouring Second World War battle sites for relics.

Assembly of the machine is very simple. You click together the three-piece stem, and then twist the locking collars to eliminate movement. The 9" carbon-fibre coil is fitted in the normal way to the carbon-fibre lower stem, and is secured with a nylon nut and bolt. You then have the choice of clipping the control box under the arm-cup, winding the coil lead up the stem and securing the connector into the control box or you can use the control box cover, which doubles as a hip mount pouch, to take the box off the stem altogether. I personally prefer leaving it on the stem, and find the whole setup very light and perfectly balanced.

The machine is supplied with batteries and a set of XP backphones that fit around the back of your head, resting over the tops of your ears. There are also optional sets of wireless headphones available (WS2 and WS3) and the transmitter for these is integrated on the circuit board of the control box, ready for their use.

Controls

The Gmaxx 2 looks just like a GMP, sharing the same controls, and control layout. There are four adjustable control knobs and two three-way switches that operate all settings.

Fig 1 Brooch

The detector switches on as you start to turn the sensitivity switch clockwise, and as you continue to turn the knob, the sensitivity of the detector increases. There is a red marker at 3 o'clock showing the recommended setting. These red markers are also found next to the other controls, indicating XP's recommended factory settings.

Adjusting each control to these marked settings will put the Gmaxx 2 into a multi toned program where iron isn't heard. So the detector only sounds when non-ferrous targets are encountered. This is a well thought out program, making this detector very easy to use, especially for first time users.

Two of the most interesting controls are the IRON THRESHOLD and IRON VOLUME. The IRON THESHOLD is a progressive discrimination control that increases as you turn it clockwise. In most machines this would be labelled 'discrimination' and it's only when we understand the IRON VOLUME control we see why it isn't the case in this instance.

When the IRON VOLUME is turned fully anti-clockwise, to the factory-preset mark, iron is totally silenced. As you turn this control clockwise you start hearing iron targets as low buzzes. The default marked setting for IRON THESHOLD is marked 'AUTO', and in this position all iron is discriminated (or buzzes with increased IRON VOLUME.)

Turning the IRON THRESHOLD clockwise out of AUTO, progressively increases the discrimination range and will increase the number of iron targets giving low-buzz responses (those falling below the threshold setting). Iron targets above the progressive setting will give medium tones.

Note: *Even if IRON THESHOLD is turned fully clockwise (full discrimination), it will not discriminate shallow hammered coins. XP very sensibly limit their detectors discrimination to the iron range. AUTO is a good setting for most situations.*

So why would you want to turn up the IRON VOLUME to hear iron? One of the best ways of using the Gmaxx 2 (and GMP) is to run a multi-tone all-metal search system. Hearing the iron as low buzzes gives users extra information about what's happening under the coil. If they can hear a lot of iron they can slow down and concentrate on winkling out the good targets likely to be more abundant on sites with these ground conditions.

The last rotating control is labelled GROUND, and this works differently to normal ground balancing found on other metal detectors. Here you use this to discriminate ground effects like the falsing associated with hot-rocks. The preset mark is at 12 o'clock and is a very good setting to remove most items possessing strong magnetic or highly mineralised characteristics. If searching clearer ground you can increase detection depth by turning this control slightly anti-clockwise (e.g. 11 o'clock.)

The switch marked FREQ. SHIFT, is used first to adjust the working frequency of the detector. This may be necessary when two XP detectors are being used in close proximity, or when working in areas with strong electromagnetic interference (EMI).

The second use for this switch is to change the wireless channel of the optional WS cordless headphones.

The second switch is the SILENCER, which adjusts the effectiveness of the discrimination, recovery speed and number of tones you hear from the machine. As you click this switch in turn from 0 through 1 to 2, the iron discrimination improves with each change. The trade-off for this extra discrimination performance is a slight drop in overall speed (recovery rate). Throughout this field test I used this control in position one, which gave me minimal falsing with blisteringly fast target responses.

The silencer switch is also used to change the number of tones from three to two. Clicking the switch between 1 and 2 twice within two seconds does this. To return back to three tones, the detector must be switched off and back on again.

Test Bed

On my test bed the Gmaxx 2 performed very well, finding most targets. The only limitation to the detectors depth was due to the stock 9" coil, which is considerably smaller than most detectors I test nowadays. I would've loved the opportunity to try out the optional 11" coil on my deeper buried targets, as I'm confident of good results being achieved.

Target responses were very clear and positive, making them unmissible. Deep targets gave lovely smooth gentle (more distant) responses, with perfect clear positive tones.

I was particularly impressed with the responses from a cut-half penny, proving to me that this low-frequency machine was still going to be a 'killer' hammered detector.

In the field

The first field I chose on which to test the machine is one I consider to be my best Roman site. This field has consistently produced Roman coins and artefacts over a ten-acre area. It was early April and the winter wheat had just been top-dressed, so my time here was fast running out as the crop was already showing signs of an imminent growth spurt.

I decided to search the lower edge of the field that looks down over the valley of the Great Ouse. This field slopes gently down to a barbed wire fence, before dropping steeply down 40 metres to the river's edge. Along this fence line is an area of iron-infested ground, which has proved to be virtually impossible to detect by all but the fastest detectors.

I set the detector up in the recommended presets; just increasing the IRON VOLUME to give low buzzes to iron and started working the area. Immediately after the first couple of swings I dug my first Roman coin.

After half an hour, the continuous iron tones started to irritate, so I turned the IRON VOLUME back anti-clockwise to the preset position (silencing the iron targets.) I then continued to work this area slowly, digging any repeatable signal. One of these came through smooth and clear, and digging down a full spade depth revealed a nice 1st century Hod Hill type Roman brooch.

Fig 2 Brooch

I then moved up the slope of the field to the more prolific Roman coin area. I didn't expect much from this area, as it had been well searched for the last five months since being deep ploughed. I adjusted the IRON VOLUME back to 10 o'clock so I could hear the iron again, and after a couple of minutes I received my first positive signal. Digging down a couple of inches I recovered a tiny Roman minim. This was quite impressive considering how many detectors had missed it! So the Gmaxx 2 isn't just deep, it's very sensitive too.

Fig 3 Roman coins

I continued working my way further up the field until I eventually reached the top hedge, dividing the field from the main road. This area is full of junk thrown and blown through the hedge. After digging a few pieces of foil and a deep drinks can, I unearthed a small Saxon pinhead. This is the second of these I've dug in recent field tests.

Fig 4 Pinhead

So that left one last question for me, does the Gmaxx 2 share the same hammy-magnet attributes as its siblings the GMP and Deus? To answer this I travelled to a Buckinghamshire farm, where I had been informed that one of the fields had just been ploughed and seeded. On arrival I was met with disappointment, as I could see the 'seeded' bit was a tad premature. There were three heavy tractors rotovating, seeding and rolling the field. I decided not to play 'dodge the tractor' and annoy the farmer, so settled on a field that had been laid to pasture for the last two years.

I started working the bottom of this sloping field where I'd previously been successful finding hammered. After detecting a full length, I turned to return and immediately received a strong positive

repeatable signal. I knew it wasn't very deep, so chopped a 'U' shaped sod of grass and peeled it back revealing the unmistakable half-moon shape of a cut-half penny.

Fig 5 Hammered coins

I continued searching the bottom of this field finding two more hammered pennies, before setting off to another area of the farm where Roman coins have been found. On arrival I could see the wheat was getting quite high, so decided to work close to the hedge where it was stunted a little. On the first run detecting up the slight hill, I received a soft smooth signal, which I recognised as going to be deep. Digging down just over a spade depth I could see a silver Roman coin glisten in the excavated soil. I couldn't believe the condition of this coin, it looked like it was minted yesterday.

Fig 6 Silver Roman

So all in all, a good days detecting… and confirmation the Gmaxx 2 shares the hammered finding abilities of its high frequency siblings.

Conclusion

The field-testing of the Gmaxx 2 has given me a bit of a dilemma. I love the Goldmaxx Power, but on my Roman sites where the higher conductive finds tend to be more desirable, I can see this detector is going to be a better choice.

I can't really find anything to dislike about this detector, and my only recommendation would be to obtain the larger coil, which will optimise the low-frequency depth advantage of this machine.

So, why isn't this detector more popular here in the UK? I guess this is merely due to the popularity of its higher frequency stable mates and our obsession for finding small hammered coins. It should be more popular; the Gmaxx 2 is a great all-round detector.

TEST RESULTS

Test Results XP Gmaxx 2 (Scores out of ten based on price category)	
Ergonomics (weight/balance)	9
Simplicity/user friendliness	9
Build quality	9
Weather resistance	9
Discrimination Performance	9
Overall detection Performance	9
Value for money £775	9
SEARCHER RATING	

Competition: This machine could be yours!

Manufacturer of the Gmaxx 2 range of detectors XP, in conjunction with Regton, have been extremely generous and have given us this machine for the competition! It is worth **£775.00** and all you have to do is fill in the **coupon** (no photocopies allowed), and answer this question: **Name the type of Roman brooch found by our tester?** Then send it to us at **XP Gmaxx 2 Competition**, ***The Searcher***, 17 Down Road, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2PX by **30th June** together with your name, address and contact number. Good luck!

Please enter me in the draw for the Gmaxx 2 competition:

Name the type of Roman brooch found by our tester?

.....

Name .....

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Tel number.....

WIN! WIN! WIN!

Competition Rules:

This competition is open to all citizens of the UK 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: ***The Searcher* – Gmaxx 2 Competition, 17 Down Road, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey. GU1 2PX**. To be valid, entries need to be received on or before **30th June 2011**. 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.