

Field Test Report XP Deus

Part 2

When reporting on any new detector I find it necessary to take myself off on my own away from friends. This is so that I can fully concentrate on the differing conditions and understand how and why the detector reacts the way it does (or not, as sometimes the case might be!).

However, when I have understood most of the detector's attributes and vagaries, I look forward to being in the good company of my detecting friends, where nobody has anything to prove and where detecting etiquette is second nature (e.g. no crowding and non-competitiveness). Detecting is meant to be a pleasure, not a vehicle to prove how good (you think) you are.

I get really honest, thoughtful and sometimes even brutal feedback when I bring along a new detector and offer it to one of them saying, "Have a go with this and see what you think to it."

The Déus so far has always provoked the same response from whomever I have offered it to. Firstly there has been a note of astonishment, "My God this is unbelievably light". This is invariably followed a few minutes later with a wry grin and "This thing is so precise, it's brilliant" and then, "I don't care how much it is, I must have one". Finally, "That's typical of you John, why can't you let me use it for just a bit longer instead of hogging it all for yourself?"

With the amount of rain and snow that we have had this winter, the weather hasn't exactly been that conducive for detecting purposes. However when the farmland is under snow or waterlogged all is not lost as I can generally find somewhere either in the woods or else on the beaches.

Beaches? Did I hear that right? You are going to take an XP to the beach? Aren't you the one that has always unequivocally maintained that, "The multi-frequency machine is the daddy when it comes to detecting on the beaches" And you have owned and used one for years. "I would be prepared to fight to see this!"



Fig.1. Saxon sceatta.

Fig.2. A few bits and bobs.



Fig.3. Roman child's bracelet.



Fig.4. Roman fibulae.



Beach Use & Settings

A phone call to my friend and fellow detectorist David Hunter from Brightlingsea about the winds and the tide times for the local beaches saw us the next day ensconced on a windswept piece of coastline belonging to darkest Essex. The first 20-30 yards of the

sloping beach was dry and consisted of coarse sand, but where it levelled off this became wet and clay-like with oozy mud and large stones.

So let's start from scratch. Switch on the Déus, (press top left button), and press again for headphone speaker not remote control speaker. Using the plus and minus buttons scroll down to 7 Wet

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Fig.5. Celtic quarter stater.

Beach. Press top right button for GB, press middle button for Beach, then plus or minus button for Yes for wet sand or No for dry sand. If you chose No and work the dry sand the detector will revert back to land value scale for the Ground Balancing (60-90). If Yes this will give a value scale between 00-30. This is the digital zone for highly saline wet ground conditions.

You then have the choice to either manually adjust the setting (plus and minus buttons) or pump the coil. Pump the coil several times; a picture of the coil will have appeared on the screen until it has successfully ground balanced when it will read GB okay. Press the top right hand button (return) and you are ready to go. This whole operation is very simple and takes less than a minute, which is a darn sight quicker than I can type it!

The first time I checked out the beach mode (indoors) I saw that it was running on the 18kHz frequency. At the time I questioned it, but then realised what better frequency for picking out the more difficult to find tiny objects like thin gold chains, earrings and women's small finger rings. The name of the game with beach detecting over the wet stuff is to try and keep the coil as close and parallel to the sand/mud as possible without it touching. This is also a really good discipline for all "land" detectorists to emulate if they wish to increase their find rates, rather than just cranking up the sensitivity.

There is one very important observation that I have made concerning using the Déus. The settings that have been chosen by the XP team for each and every mode haven't just been pulled out of a hat. On the contrary, it's quite the reverse; they have all been carefully tried and tested out in the field by experts so that they will give you optimum results with very high levels of detector stability. Therefore, there is really no need to alter anything until you have become really au fait with the workings of the Déus. Altering one thing could have a detrimental impact on something else that you hadn't given a second thought to! More about this later, but for now let's get back to the detecting on the beach.

I went straight down to where the beach flattened out onto the wet muddy bits and was getting signals quite reg-



Fig.6. Beach mode 1.



Fig.7. Beach mode 2 GB.



Fig.8. Beach mode 3 notch.



Fig.9. Beach mode 4 reactivity.



Fig.10. Two hours' worth from the beach.

ularly, but not what you would call clean ones. A quick glance at the meter showed low digital readouts signifying iron, which as it happened did exist in the form of buried iron sea defences. There was nothing unusual in that, except they should have been a lot louder, (I didn't realise the importance of this until I started hitting the good targets!)

I also had the odd false signal when sweeping from the drier to wetter areas over surface water. I could have alleviated part of this by ground balancing again over the wetter areas and if necessary drop the sensitivity a notch or two; but once again as before, the non-

repeatable "bad" signals were slightly muted and I wanted to find out more.

I had hit the right zone of the beach's gradient as good signals were coming more frequently. There was definitely no mistaking them, giving a bright crisp tone, very sharp, even when signalling the decimal 1ps and 2ps with the iron inserts. As you can see from the photograph, they are encrusted with rust from the inserts. The signal from them was the low grunt for iron but it included a higher, brighter tone for the "good part" of the coin. After digging a couple, these type of signals were dead easy to recognise; no ifs and buts, "That's a



Fig.11. Saxon ring brooch.



Fig.12. Roman bronze artefact.



Fig.13. Early silver coins.



Fig.14. Saxon "horse" terminal.

decimal 1p or 2p for sure!" Further along the beach I encountered an area that was more heavily contaminated with bits of iron. This, I felt, might be one of those times to look at altering the settings.

To do this is simple. Press menu, press again until reactivity (recovery speed) on Wet beach mode is selected. It already has a default setting of 3 so it is possible to go up a couple of notches to the maximum of 5 for really bad conditions. However, the high setting will need to be altered back when moving out of the contaminated area. It is very easy to forget and just leave it, especially if you are still making finds, and here is the reason why you need to change back. Increasing the value of the reactivity will give you less depth! It's brilliant when searching the contaminated areas, because depth isn't what is required in these areas. It already has a setting of 3 in beach mode to cope with most situations, so be careful what and when you change!

I decided to give it a try a bit higher up the slope on the drier sand for a while. Two or three £1 coins turned up

along with some 50ps and 20ps (all of which were spent later!) Then the piece of the day turned up when I found a silver ring, followed shortly by the earring.

I was also finding the odd of pull-tab/ring-pull, so I hit the menu button for notch to try and alleviate the problem. The initial notch has a narrow adjustable "window" of six digital values (i.e. 55-61). Now here's the clever bit – press "expert" and you have three separate notches that are fully adjustable for the width of each window. I'm now also thinking of those damned irritating scraps of tinfoil found on fields that has had pigs on them!

Just using the one notch did sort out the majority of tabs/pulls in the areas that I detected without any noticeable drop in the amount of coinage found. But obviously care must be taken with any type of notching, and always the irritant factor of tabs or other trash should be weighed up against coin/finds loss that might also be in that "window".

The last item that came to light was a strapless watch that was slowly disintegrating in the sand. How lucky to find

its discoloured glass beside it though? Immediately after digging this the heavens opened up, and we both headed back towards the car.

On comparing the finds after the couple of hours stint, David remarked, "I thought you were having me on, as every time I looked around you were busy digging. That Deus thing really does work well on the beach."

Praise indeed! In the cold light of day though, and thinking about it, why did it produce? One of the major factors was that it signalled on the "rubbish coinage" of the 1ps and 2ps with their iron inserts that other detectors might possibly ignore. Another factor was the speed, precision and – most importantly – the veracity with which it delivered its signal tones and visual readouts. This gave the all important ground coverage. The depth on some of the finds was more than just good (although not in the class of a pulse machine), as was the detector's ability to work and produce the goods amongst the many areas of iron contamination.

Yes, I can go with this. In the past I have advised that it would be better to take your dog for a walk than use the XP on wet sand. Today, however, it is a different story. The Deus might be of the lightest weight, but it definitely isn't a lightweight when it comes to beach detecting! It doesn't just work, it actually works extremely well.

Farmland

I did manage to get out and about on a few of my farm sites with the Deus. Obviously after Christmas conditions weren't that great, but that's part and parcel of detecting in the winter months.

I had a nice little medieval site in mind. It had previously produced artefacts and hammered coinage covering a range of monarchs from the Plantagenets through to the Commonwealth at the end of the Stuarts. If I could get on there, it would be a good and fair trial for the Deus.

One of the first things you need to know and understand about the Deus is the fact that the fast mode is not the beginning and the end of everything about this detector. Yes, it is impressive, and yes it has a recovery speed that will make the XP Goldmaxx Power seem pedestrian by comparison; but there are

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other modes and different frequencies to suit different search conditions.

To use only the Déus fast as the primary search mode in anything other than iron/trash contaminated areas would be wrong and would negate all the other attributes that makes this detector so great. I will repeat it again: higher reactivity levels (faster recovery speed) equate to less depth on objects and coins in "normal" soil conditions.

To give you an example of what I mean. Suppose that you are going to search a new field. It's been ploughed, and the soil is well drained and has had enough time to compact. Which mode do you chose? For me it would be the GM power mode, and here's why. It will allow me to detect at a reasonable pace, give good depths and ensures reliable information via the tone of the signals and iron volume; it operates at 18kHz, so I won't miss the tiny items. If it was over stubble, I would be inclined to use either one of the 12kHz frequency modes for that extra depth as the coil is further from the ground (basic 1). If pasture, then possibly an 8kHz frequency mode for a bit more of a punch, such as the G Maxx. If the ground conditions change on any of the above, then it is a simple matter of adjusting the settings or changing to a more suitable mode.

The medieval site was situated on a reasonably flat field near to a 12th century church on a hill. Looking over the hedge of the south-side of the field, the ground gently sloped down to a small stream. As previously mentioned, finds have come from this site in the past but they couldn't really be described as being prolific.

On arrival, the ground was pretty sodden but fortunately for me it had been sown with wheat, which made it easier to detect. I am fortunate in that the farmer has no problems with me detecting over this type of crop.

I started at the church side of the field as this had been the most prolific area in the past. I switched on and went to the 18kHz Goldmaxx mode. I also ground balanced, but didn't really need to, as the default setting is 90 and this is generally good for most detecting situations.

I should be used to it by now, but the first signal sounded distinctly like a cartridge and it was! Well, you have to dig the first couple until you "get your

Fig.15.
Early
medieval
buckles.



Fig.16.
The
finger
ring and
earring
from the
beach.



Fig.17. Early
face horse
silver units.



Fig.18. "Lost time"
from the beach.

ear in" so to speak, don't you? It wasn't long before the proper signals starting coming. Okay, they were just bits of lead and the odd button, but they did get the adrenalin pumping on a cold windy morning! The first coin of the day gave a really crisp "I'm a small highly conductive coin, dig me" type of signal! Giving a digital reading of 48, it turned out to be a very muddy, small hammered, of what looked like Elizabeth. Very shortly afterwards it was followed by another, equally as small. Previous trips with my old Goldmaxx Power had yielded one or two coins around this period, but they were bigger – an Elizabethan shilling and nothing ever smaller than a sixpence or a groat. Those two coins had managed to put a smile onto this old geezer's cold face.

I was getting the odd bit of iron coming through on the iron volume, but nothing that warranted me making any alterations to the settings. However, the adrenalin rush was wearing off, as small scraps of lead once again became the predominant signals given out by the Déus.

It was time to give my boots a bit of a clean to save me dragging half the field around with me. I decided I might as well have a cup of soup to warm me up while I was at it. This would also give me a chance to have a think about what was happening on the field.

I returned back out to the site where I left my spade as a marker. I started detecting again, but as I worked my way across the field the iron contamination became heavier and heavier, until even-



Fig.20.
Encrusted
coins from
the beach.



Fig.19. Good
conditioned
denarius from
the wood.

tually my sweep speed had slowed right down to accommodate up to four and sometimes five unwanted signals with each sweep.

I therefore had a choice to make: drop the sensitivity down and up the reactivity; or change to Déus fast? No contest. Unleash the animal and let's see just what it's got in its locker!

Straight away the signals definitely improved, becoming shorter and crisper. They were no longer "melting" into one another and becoming "fuzzy" with the coil over-loading with too many iron signals. I am not lying to you, when I tell you that I could sweep over these unwanted targets at my normal speed – and make finds! In actual fact, I could go faster than my normal sweep speed, a real lot faster! Over confident? Bragging? A sales pitch? Not one little bit!

When I was demonstrating the Déus for filming in the south of France, the next demonstration of Déus' fast mode was so astonishing it blew my mind. I had never in my wildest dreams imagined anything operating at this speed

Three coins were placed on the ground with a gap of an inch between the first and second coin and an inch between the second and third coin. Maintaining a height of 4-5 inches above the three coins, I made a normal sweep using a setting to reactivity of 1, representing the recovery speed of the majority of detectors on the market today. When swept over in either direction, the three coins gave only one signal between them!

I upped the reactivity to 2, which represented the recovery speed of the Goldmaxx Power (this, in my view, had

the fastest recovery speed of any detector until the Déus). It signalled two of the three coins when swept in either direction.

I then increased the reactivity to 3 (Déus fast country!) I located the three coins, with three signals in either direction!

I then increased the reactivity to 4 and increased my sweep speed quite substantially, resulting in, again three signals.

I then increased the reactivity to 5 and purposely tried to beat the Déus' response. I wasn't sweeping the coil, I was whipping it from side to side, so fast that the coil became a blur; but I couldn't beat it! Three signals, incredible!

When you get to see the film clip, that demonstration alone will definitely blow your socks off. There is so much more to this cutting edge detector than just that one mode for searching, though.

Going back to the church field, I ended up by finding a couple of James Scottish hammered and one and a part coin of Commonwealth silver in amongst that heavily contaminated iron area. The signals weren't "iffy" but were recognised on the first sweep-over as loud and clear. They were all very small thin section coins, which, when considering the amount of nails that were surrounding them were, in my opinion, too small and too heavily masked to have been found with anything else.

If it had been just one or two coins of this size from the area searched, then it wouldn't be unreasonable to think that they had simply been missed in the past by operator error; but not that amount.

There had been no indication either, that would have warranted me dropping down to the small elliptical coil when using the Goldmaxx Power in the past. Let's be honest here, in my opinion if the Goldmaxx Power couldn't have done it, nothing else would have!

Roman Coins From the Woods

I was invited to try some woodland on a friend's site – the landowner concerned kindly having given him permission to take me along for the day.

My friend had been for a quick recce some months earlier and had found several shards of local grey ware pottery, a couple of bits of samian ware, and oyster shells on the edge of the wood. The exploratory search culminated in him finding a few coins and a broken bit of a fibula. It seemed definitely worth a day's detecting.

Paul was using his Goldmaxx Power, so I thought that I would drop down to 12kHz and try out the basic 1 mode on my Deus.

The woods were a mixture of beech and fir, so in places were clear for detecting but in others a bit more confined. I therefore decided to keep the remote control attached to my belt and out of the way. Thank goodness the headphones were cordless as well so there would be no curly cord catching on the trees or undergrowth! The carpet of leaves and pine needles meant that the ground wasn't frozen solid like the farmland; this was a bonus as the digging was relatively easy in the loamy soil.

The first signal, of course, was a cartridge cap and the next and the next! It seemed to be the English equivalent of Custer's last stand! The thing with the remains of shotgun cartridges is that they can come anywhere on the meter. I have had them as low as 42 and as high as 73; notching them out is therefore not going to work. Another attribute of the Déus that has been carried over from the Goldmaxx, it that is possible to identify cartridges caps successfully just by the tone. However, you need to be brave to begin with and stop thinking about what you might be missing. After a while we started to find odd bits of pottery while we were digging, and also the odd bit or part of an oyster shell on the surface.

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Finds then started to appear in the shape of small Roman bronze coins and the odd bit of fibula and such. What surprises me is the scarcity of iron signals which occur on Roman sites in the pine woods that I have searched. I can only attribute this to the acidic soil encountered. This would account for the bronzes being a bit worse for wear, but the silver coins usually turning up in pretty good condition.

I won't bore you with the details of each and every coin that was found. Suffice to say that the 12kHz frequency mode of the Déus consistently found the deeper coins and, of course, with only a little iron contamination to worry about, recovery speed was not an issue.

One thing I did find was that ground balancing the Déus every now and again was certainly helpful (could this be as a result of the residues of iron contamination leeching into the soils after being "eaten" by the acidity?). Whatever the case, it helped!

I will hold my hands up and say that I should have tried the tracking in the expert settings, as on reflection this also could have been beneficial. However there is only so much that you can do, and also only so much information to pass on before saturation point is reached and future information is then wasted.

One point regarding tracking: don't attempt to use this if you are on a site with lots of nails or iron in general. The Déus will try to track the iron! Be careful!

As you can see from the photographs, the time spent detecting in the wood turned out to be quite productive. It is also instructive in that you need to assess the situation before you make a decision on which programme to choose when using the Déus.

It is similar to choosing a detector. They will all make finds: but which one suits your sites best and deals most efficiently with all the inherent problems encountered?

Try to understand what is needed. Here is just one example that was related to me by somebody who is lucky enough to own a Déus.

"I wanted depth so I chose a lower frequency, but it got a bit noisy so I lowered the sensitivity and upped the recovery speed [reactivity]."

"What sort of site caused you to do that?"

Fig.21. Some of the finds from the wood.



Fig.22. Coins from church field.



"Oh, it was my really productive Roman site. It's very naily!"

Lower frequency for depth on a naily site? No.

Up the recovery speed? Not until you change to another programme and a different frequency – and then not a low one.

Summary

I have been writing field tests for a fair number of years now, and the people who know me – or have read my articles/books, watched or talked to me – are aware that first and foremost I'm John the detectorist. I have never had an axe to grind with any manufacturer's detector (most have asked me to write about or make a film, DVD or a video clip about their machines). I have always maintained that what works for me on

my land does not necessarily mean that it will be best detector for anyone else on their land.

Writing these two reports for the magazine about Déus has left me with mixed feelings. On the one hand I feel that I need to write at least another two of these articles to really give you a more in depth evaluation and therefore more of an understanding of just how advanced and user friendly the Déus is. Doing so would mean virtually writing a manual as there are so many new innovations on this detector that it was hard to decide what was to be left out – yet hopefully still remain interesting and informative for the readers.

On the other hand I really do feel privileged that I was chosen ahead of any other detectorist in Europe to be filmed demonstrating the Déus.



Fig.23. "Tiny tots" from among the nails.



Fig.24. George III half crown.



Fig.25. Roman artefact.

I wasn't asked to write these two field reports; I volunteered. I have never been so excited by any detector as I have with this one. Believe me when I tell you that the more I use it, the more I can appreciate

just how superb this creation by XP really is.

The Déus truly is the first all-round detector; the bar hasn't just been raised again by XP detectors, it has

been smashed completely. I have written about the Déus technology being a "New chapter in detecting history". But "Bringing the light of a new dawning" is just as appropriate.

I have written about the cutting edge technology that this detector has incorporated in its workings, and yet it remains so simple to use. You can switch it on, choose a programme, never make any adjustments, and it will make finds *easily*.

You and your detecting skills will grow with this machine; it can be the deepest, fastest and lightest detector you will ever use; at the same time it can also be the easiest and most forgiving!

It is my belief that there will be lots of playing catch-up by others for a quite some time in the foreseeable future. Which begs the question "But what will XP have developed by then?" TH

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