

• Minelab • Times •

Junk is not always Rubbish

by Charlie

I suppose you could call me one of the 'grey nomad' brigade, retired and spending a bit of time travelling around Australia. I haven't been detecting long with my GP 3000 and most of my detecting has been in the Golden Triangle of Victoria, but recently I drove up to Queensland for somewhere new.

Travelling north, I really didn't know much about the goldfields in Nth Queensland so travelling through Cairns, I called into Nth Qld Miners Den. The chap there, George Mayer, didn't know me from Adam but when I asked him about where I could give it a go, he told me to "Head west young man" and gave me directions to a goldfield out of Georgetown about 5 hours into western Queensland. The directions he gave were easy to follow and the next day I found myself a likely spot.

The area showed all the signs of being well worked by the old timers, with one area in particular being the old mining camp. My first inclination was to head to the hills looking for a new 'patch' but I only had about a week to spend and thought better of it. I thought given the limited time, I'd be better off sticking to the diggings themselves. Being a patient type of person, I decided to give the heart of the mining camp a go. Rubbish was everywhere, but who knows what you will find, it may not be valuable but you usually find interesting artefacts.

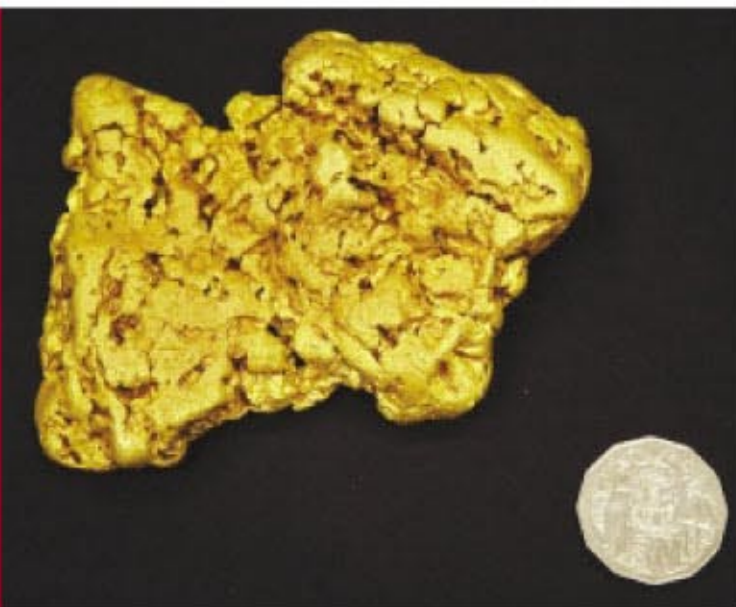
In amongst the junk were old tobacco and match-box tins but on my 40th odd dig for the day, I dug down a few inches which is the zone that most of the junk is lying and found the target deeper down and the signal getting stronger. Dig a bit more, then dig a bit more, "this is getting tiring".

Eventually, down to 14 inches, up comes this beautiful nugget, which weighs in at a little over 10oz.

They say patience is a virtue but I reckon a bit of patience and willingness to detect where others don't has really paid off for me. I drove back to Cairns, floating on air and popped into George's shop again to show him what I got and to thank him for his kind assistance.



**Minelab
Strikes
Again!
A 44oz
lump found
somewhere
in Eastern
Australia.**



**The GP3500
doing what it
does best.
Sniffing out BIG
gold in heavily
mineralised
ground.
Just look at that
ironstone!!
It's enough to
make other
detectors cry...**

Testing the all-new X-TERRA by Nenad L.

As an experienced detector operator working at Minelab, I have the fun job of field-testing new detectors, and with the brand new X-Terra series, you can put rings around the word FUN!! From putting the detector together, turning it on, swinging the detector, hearing a signal, pin-pointing and recovering the first of many coins - all of the attributes of the machine revolve around simplicity, ease-of-use, and best of all great performance. The weight and balance of the detector is brilliant, and you can swing it for hours without any fatigue. Both X-Terra's come standard with a padded armrest with adjustable arm strap, and the 3-piece locking shaft feels very solid when detecting, yet is easily broken down for compact storage.

When it comes to Coin & Treasure detectors, I am a long time Sovereign user, and have had some experience with the Explorer and more recently with the Quattro, so swinging a low-cost digital single frequency detector was a whole new experience, but once I picked one up, it was difficult to switch off! Putting the detector through its paces at parks and playgrounds within walking distance of the Minelab factory, I quickly began to appreciate the easy to read LCD, as this was a great aid in identifying good vs. bad targets. When discriminating, good targets will lock on and provide a positive ID reading, whereas Iron targets will give either no signal or a clipped signal followed by a "- -" reading on the meter. In the case where multiple targets are present, a quick change to All-metal will allow you to isolate the good from the bad targets with ease.

The 4-tone audio is great (X-terra 30 has 3 tones), and when using the all-metal mode, Iron not only gives a negative ID number, but also a very low audio tone as well. What this means is that you can search in All-metal and see all the targets that are present, but only dig up the targets you want. The pinpointing function is the best I've used on any detector. As you sweep over the target the signal will sharpen up and the visual pinpoint graph fills up when you are directly over the target. As you dig closer to the target, the volume and pitch of the pinpoint audio increases. This is a great tool, as you can predict the size and depth of the target, which helps with the speed of recovery. I found that in grassed areas I was able to probe shallower coins within seconds, and could pop them out of the soil without any digging.

During field-testing several targets were located, including a 1914 half penny, a 1917 one penny, and 3 modern Chinese coins in the same hole! The sensitivity was much better than expected, as I found several small bullets, brass buttons and various other trinkets (see photo). On the beach the X-Terra works great; on the dry sand the sensitivity can be set quite high, and wet sand conditions are easily dealt with by lowering the sensitivity to suit. Being well before the big summer crowds, targets were few and far between, but a few coins did see the light of day proving that the X-Terra will find the goodies at the beach.

The X-Terra features many new and intuitive features which I don't have the room to mention here, so contact your nearest Minelab dealer and request a copy of the detailed four page brochure, and you can check out the new X-Terra website which will be updated with information, field tests and advanced user tips.

www.minelabx-terra.com



2005 Panning Championships



Some happy prize winners.



Youngsters showing the oldies how its done!!!

THE EUREKA STRIKES GOLD!!!!



Since using the Minelab Eureka Gold, I have been amazed at the amount of gold I've picked up at popular detecting spots.

It has surprising depth capabilities which I was pleased to find, and with a reliable discriminator I can cover much more ground to dig those golden holes. The 60Khz frequency is deadly on those smaller nuggets the bigger machines leave behind. Lucky for me I'm not fussy, I'll take the big and the small, and if the

bigger nuggets are there the Eureka will more than accommodate for them too.

This is a very easy machine to operate, even for a "Mug" like me. Automatic ground balance and triple frequency modes at your fingertips make it a breeze. Thank you Minelab.

Matthew Keirle, Wellington, NSW

The QUATTRO, worth its weight in SALT!!

My name is Richard Robinson, Greenville, Tn and I have been detecting for 30 years. I recently traded on a Quattro and was pleasantly surprised by its ease of use and depth BUT what really took me by surprise was the performance of the Quattro on wet sand and in the surf. I set the Quattro to Coin and Jewelry, and held the coil steady as I hit the Noise Cancel. The Sens. was set on Auto... With these settings, the machine ran absolutely quite, nothing but a slight hum of the threshold AND I was getting coins out of the wet sand and surf that everybody else was missing because of the extreme depth and the amount of corrosion. On Auto I was digging coins at 12 + inches, even sometimes giving up because I couldn't keep up with the water. This is not hype and it serves no purpose whatsoever for me since I am a dealer but do not carry Minelab..... Anyway sorry to ramble, but your Quattro is awesome... Thanks

Richard Robinson, Backwoods Detector Sales, Greenville, Tn (USA)

The GP3500 FIELD TEST in WA C. Pearce, VIC

So, how does the new GP3500 perform? My mate Sid and I headed to the west to try it out and here is what we found. We headed to the Laverton area and found an old dry blowing area and got out the new machine. We switched on and within half an hour managed to find two small pieces, which really zipped in. The sensitivity of these machines has been increased and the threshold is a lot smoother which in turn gives for a quieter and more stable machine.

Some of the new features on the machine are the three position tracking speed, and we found that in quiet ground the Slow speed was the best, and as the ground gets more mineralised you switch to Medium, and then Fast for the really hot ironstone rich ground. The faster the tracking speed the more stable the threshold is in the hot ground. However in non-variable ground, working in fixed tracking mode also helps the machine stability, which in turn allows for better detection of the fainter deeper targets.

The next feature is the discriminator pot, which allows you to turn the discriminator off when fully turned anti-clockwise. We found that with the discriminator on there was a slight waver in the threshold and turning it off reduced this waver, so it's best to keep it off when not in trashy ground and when you receive a signal, turn it on to check the target. Only discriminate surface targets where the coil can be swept cleanly side-to-side, as when the coil is turned on its side in the hole for pinpointing purposes we received a couple of intermittent signals that

could be mistaken for discrimination, but on further digging we found that it was indeed a gold nugget.

The Manual tune knob has some great advantages in that it allows you to pick the frequency band - either high or low to suit the nuggets and ground you are working. Remember, as a general rule high frequency is best for the smaller nuggets and low frequency for the bigger nuggets. We found that tuning the machine in when you arrive at an area is a must for general detecting, and then when you want to grid an area you can adjust the frequency to suit your needs. One feature I would like to see on this machine is a frequency display so you actually know what frequency you are using, but you can do this simply by counting the number of turns from each end of the scale.

The remaining features of the machine such as depth / signal / sensitivity you will find on the GP3000 and GP extreme except for one, and this feature I believe is a major advantage, that is, the Ground Balance button on the handle. This button allows you to tune the machine with the push of the thumb and changes the Ground Balance mode from fixed to tracking or visa versa depending on where the control box switch is set at the time.

We found the Quick-trak to be a major leap forward for the serious prospector, and keeps the coil on the ground and finding targets. When you hit a mineralised patch of ground a quick push retunes the

machine and away you go again. This machine is now far simpler to operate in Fixed, and this mode offers far more advantages when trying to find those deeper nuggets.

In summary we found that the GP 3500 out performed the GP 3000 by around ten to fifteen percent and is the next benchmark detector and a must for the serious prospector. We finished with eight and a half ounces of gold for the six weeks we were in the west and had a fantastic time; the weather wasn't on our side but it was a trip to remember.



Commander 15 x 12 Mono and DD Coils

The Commander range of coils has been released on to the detecting market and recently I took a 15 x 12 Mono and DD over to WA to try on their goldfields. What I found was that the Commander coils performed very well and are extremely sensitive coils able to detect small gold down to 0.5 of a gram and large nuggets at good depth.

The DD coil was very quiet and good to use and managed to have less interference coming in compared to a competitors 20 inch DD.



The Mono as with all monos was a bit noisier on the hot rocks but when you received a signal you knew straight away that it was a target.

Both coils were great to use and their shape allowed you to get good coverage while being able to get in between the bushes. Great patch finders due to their size and robustness. Both the 15 x 12 inch coils were very stable coils and you could knock them around and not get those sporadic noises appearing that you get when hitting rocks and some sticks. These coils gave you the feeling that they where unbreakable and you detected with more gusto and speed knowing that if you got a signal it was a target.

Chris Pearce, VIC



The NEW X-TERRA All-Purpose Treasure Detector

Minelab has just released a brand new Coin & Treasure detector called the X-Terra. It is the lightest and most ergonomically balanced detector Minelab have ever released, and will run for approx 25 hours on just four AA batteries. **Two models are available, the X-Terra 30 and X-Terra 50.**

Here is a short list of features:

1. Lightweight waterproof 9" concentric search coil
2. Perfectly balanced 3-piece shaft
3. VFLEX hybrid analogue/digital technology
4. Large easy to read Target ID number
5. Multi-notch discrimination, fully editable with Auto save
6. Battery level indicator
7. Accurate depth gauge meter
8. Silent search Disc and All-Metal modes
9. Multi-tone audio (3 for X-Terra 30, 4 for X-Terra 50)
10. Variable pitch and volume Pin-point audio
11. Intuitive visual pin-pointing bar graph
12. High gain sensitivity
13. Volume control
14. 7.5kHz operation



Plus the X-Terra 50 also features:

1. 3 Position Noise Cancel
2. 2 Disc patterns plus All-Metal mode
3. Manual Ground Balance
4. Expanded ID segments (15 + 3 ferrous)
5. Changeable frequency with optional coils (to be released soon)

In the field, the X-Terra is a pleasure to use, and the easily editable disc pattern makes park hunting a breeze. The detector is as easy to use as some other "toy" detectors, but has many features and performance similar to and sometimes even exceeding more expensive detectors. You simply turn it on, select your desired disc pattern and start searching, and if it beeps, you dig! It is that simple. The detector is very easy to assemble so you can be digging up targets within minutes!!

**For more information contact
your nearest Minelab Dealer
or phone us: 1800 637 786**



Detecting with the Excalibur

by Alan V



I have owned various detectors since I bought my first one way back in 1978 and over the years have found just about everything you can find with a detector, including coins, relics, jewellery and nuggets but without a doubt it's finding gold that sets your heart pumping. Problem is if you're like me and have a job, a family and only one free day on weekends, running off to the goldfields is just not practical. These days, however, I still find gold but now it comes in a refined form.

About 4 years ago I decided to add a new dimension to my treasure hunting by going detecting in the water. I had been reading about all the great finds made by people detecting in the sea and lakes and thought that this is something I wanted to try. Even as far back as the early 80's, a detecting friend of mine said, "If you want gold get in the water". I wish I'd taken his advice sooner.

After doing research on the web and looking at the pros and cons of the various machines I decided on an Excalibur 1000. The reasoning behind my choice was that the Excalibur was a saltwater machine, where I would be doing most of my hunting, which was capable of good depth and ignored small bits of iron. Looking back I know I made the right choice.

My first day out saw me at one of the popular beaches with the Excalibur and high hopes. You knew the beach was popular because there were three other hunters already in the water when I got there. Still at the end of the day I finished up with a nice hallmarked 18ct gold ring. The hallmarking later identified the ring as being made by an Australian jeweller, T Willis, who used the mark between 1890 and 1904, which made the ring at least 100 years old.

Since that first day my gold count has passed the two hundred mark. If you include silver rings and countless coins found along the way, the Excalibur has paid for itself many times over. An interesting trend I have noticed is that I am finding more gold every year. This is in part being able to understand the Excalibur better, although it is a very easy machine to use, but the biggest factor is in understanding the changing nature of the beaches. You get a feel for where things are going to be found. In summer you look for where people congregate and hunt for newly lost items, in winter you look for where the sand has moved and brought those deeper items within reach. I've had a particularly good start to this year having found some forty-three gold items including several pieces of "old" 15ct gold, a few gold bracelets and a number of good size rings.

Another rewarding aspect of this hobby has been the opportunity, in a small way, to make things right. For some people the loss of say a ring would be that the ring is gone and they think, that's that. For others there is a personal attachment to the ring and it's loss brings about a great deal of sadness. Of the rings I have found this year three have been returned to their owners. Two rings found at the start of the year had been lost by a holiday maker who had gone home thinking she would never see them again and the third had been lost in a dam for over fifteen years.

Over the past four years water hunting for me has been the ideal pastime. This area of detecting may not be for everyone but it is what you make of it. Some people may prefer to just spend a few hours in the shallows during summer or, if you're like me, hunt all year round. I should point out that I don't find gold every time I go out but armed with the Excalibur you know your giving it the best possible chance.

Just as a final point I still do go out hunting for coins around the parks and play grounds, usually when the winds are blowing and it's too rough to get in the water. For this I have my Minelab Musketeer Advantage and this year I had my best day for coins when I found \$161 but that's another story. Happy Hunting!



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SERIOUS Detecting



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