

## Field Test



Nokta Makro have taken the metal detector market by storm over recent years so, like many others, I have been eagerly awaiting the release of their new Simplex+. The machine was initially due to be launched in August this year, but was delayed, not due to technical issues, but due to the addition of features that were not originally planned for the machine. However, Nokta Makro had listened to the

market and made these extra changes prior to the launch. Having heard that the machine was going to be at Detectival this year, I wanted to make sure I had a real close-up look and play prior to the launch to see what all the fuss was about. Promising an easy to use machine with high-end performance for under £300 already sounded too good to be true, but hang on, there is more.... much much more!

### Features

- Single frequency VLF 12 kHz
- Pinpoint mode
- IP68 water resistant up to 3 metres
- Powered by Lithium-Polymer battery (2300mAh, built-in, rechargeable)
- Wireless headphones option
- Vibration mode
- Collapsible shaft (25-52 inches)
- Compact and lightweight – 2.8 lbs



USB charging.



Slim control box.



Headphone jack.



Components of the Simplex+ package.



The Simplex+ with shaft collapsed (above) and extended (below).

- 11 inch DD coil
- Updateable software via online
- Backlit screen + LED flashlight
- 4 search modes
- Automatic or manual ground balance
- 0-99 target ID + notch discrimination option
- Iron volume
- 3 audio tones with volume control
- Depth indicator
- Adjustable sensitivity (6 levels)
- Frequency shift
- 2 years warranty
- Price: £299 or £399 with wireless headphone pack

After spending a day on the fields at Detectival in the baking heat, aching all over and sunburnt, the only thing I was really looking forward to back in the main arena was a pint of beer and a burger. Then one of the *Treasure Hunting* team reminded me that we had the opportunity to take a look at the Simplex+ machine on the Nokta Makro stand – I suddenly forgot about my aching muscles, sunburn and burger (although not my beer) and we quickly made our way over to Dilek of Nokta Makro to have a play with the new machine.

### First Impressions

My first impressions on holding the machine was that it was well made and lightweight with a great grip. Dilek then rolled off all the features



Pinpointer function.

of the machine, which to be honest made me wonder if I had picked out the right machine considering the RRP of £299 for the Simplex. "This is the Simplex?" I asked. "Yes, of course," said a confused looking Dilek. I then turned on the Simplex to check out all the features and threw a few coins and my wedding ring on the floor to see how the machine sounded along with the reaction speed. If you are already a Nokta Makro user you will be pleased to hear that the tones have not changed and the Simplex still carries the 'unique' sound with three tones.

The reaction speed seemed good but I was only playing with surface finds so couldn't gauge the sensitivity at depth. I didn't want to get too excited

as this was a pre-production model – I would need to take it out into the field to see its true colours.

I carried on asking a few more questions, then thanked Dilek for the demo and looked forward to getting my hands on one when launched. "Don't forget our amazing launch shortly," said Dilek. "Sure, I'm looking forward to it," I replied.

I will be brief on this, but hats off to Nokta Makro for managing to gather a *very* large crowd to see a mermaid (yes, a mermaid!), detecting with the Simplex in a huge fish tank, surround by pirates on hoverboard ships. What a way to showcase a fully waterproof machine in front of such a very eager audience.

### Simplex+ Arrival

A couple of weeks later, I was eagerly awaiting the delivery of my Simplex direct from Turkey where the machine is manufactured. Whilst at work, my phone pinged with a message from one of my screenagers saying "Dad, your thing's here." I rushed home that night, looking forward to getting my hands on the machine to see if it was exactly the same as the one I had tried at Detectival. To my delight, all was the same, along with a set of the wireless headphones which come as part of the Simplex+ WHP (Wireless Headphone Package). The machine was well-made and very simple to set up by following an excellent informative instruction



Electricity pylons... not a problem with frequency shift options.

manual that any new beginner would understand. This is something that I feel has been lacking with both some low-end and higher priced detectors recently. Old hands might take their knowledge of detecting for granted, but if you are new you need to understand your machine – if you don't you will be missing out on all the features.

The Simplex+ in the field.



**Out in the Field**

The next morning, I slid the Simplex into my backpack along with the headphones and picked up James, who instantly started looking at the machine whilst I was driving – there was a lot of mumbling coming from the passenger seat! We arrived at our permission to find that the farmer had rolled one particular field on which we have not had many finds since the harvest this year, so thought it a good spot to try. The ground was in perfect condition after heavy rain – James ground balanced his Rutus Alter 71 in the same spot to confirm we had no iron (which the machine alerts you to) then we headed off on our separate ways.

Ignoring all the hype I had heard regarding its amazing depth possibilities, I put my beginner's head on. For me personally, depth is not the key selling point of a machine: target ID, separation and discrimination are

more important in my opinion. I chose the standard Field mode setting and upped it to maximum sensitivity with no other changes. The Simplex chirped until James' machine was around six or seven feet away, then settled down nicely. (I have since discovered that this can be resolved using the Frequency Shift function.) The balance was good, the hand grip fitted my hand perfectly and felt very comfortable. The headphones paired almost instantly and felt very comfortable on my average sized head (despite my very large brain). Off I went, looking forward to a good few hours on the field that James and I had detected heavily before – it would be a good test-bed to see what, if anything, the Simplex could find.

**Simplex+ Display**

My first target came up reading 57-61 (from the 0-99 display), with a depth showing of three bars on the display and with a banging clear tone. Using the pinpoint function I noted the position and dug down into the soft stony soil. Smack bang in the centre was a musket ball just under a large stone at a depth of nine inches. Impressive I thought, considering the size of the musket ball and the fact that it was obstructed by a large stone.

Just a few minutes later, up came a George penny from just over 6 inches down, reading 77-81 on the display. I noticed James looking over as, after the first 20 minutes, I had two finds to his none. After a couple of hours, I was getting a lot of signals and digging almost everything to get to know the machine better. I found quite a lot of shrapnel, a few coins, a musket ball as well as some shotgun shells and several buckles.

Remembering that this is a budget machine, I was already impressed using just the standard settings. The only thing I adjusted was the volume, as when the machine gets a signal you sure do hear it! Also, I knocked the sensitivity down one notch as it became a bit chattery. I then thought it was a good time to have a play with the manual ground balance which is another great feature of this budget machine. Adjusting from 90 to 85 I then ground balanced again and was able to increase the machine to full sensitivity.

Heading towards the edge of the field, near some farm-workers cottages, I had a faint signal fluctuating between 34 and 37. I pinpointed the location, which was tricky, so I felt the target might be quite deep. Having dug down 11 inches and had a good rummage around with my pinpoint, I found



a lovely WWI Munitions badge. This government issued enamel badge was given to British women munition factory workers in recognition of their contribution to the Great War effort. The focal point of the badge is an illustration of a winged shell and an inscription that reads 'Did Her Bit on Munitions' 'Great War 1914 - 1918'. I was really pleased with this find and the performance of the Simplex so far.

As the day went on, the lightweight Simplex was a joy to use in the field and continued to find a wide range of items, including some very small buttons.

**Wet Performance**

The next day arrived with heavy rain forecast. This doesn't bother me at all when detecting, but this was going to be a great test for the Simplex on its ability to handle water – I set off for a permission with a large lake and stream to try the machine out.

On arrival, I put on my full weather-proof gear despite the glorious sunshine and headed straight for the lake before the rain. For testing purposes I decided to submerge the Simplex for 30 minutes – I can't hold my breath for that long, so I turned the machine on and threw it in the lake. Quite harsh one probably thinks, but this is a field test, so I really

wanted to see how the machine handled this. With bubbles coming from the armrest and around the coil, but importantly not from the control box, I left the machine in the water for half an hour. I started to worry that 'if' it had any issues I would have lost a day's detecting as I had left my usual machine at home!

30 minutes later, I took the Simplex and then carried out a ground balance

on the soft damp grass around the lake in the Park mode setting.

The screen, speaker and coil all seemed to perform just fine and within 10 minutes I had a signal reading 68-71 on an old footpath near the lake. I dug down four inches to find an old 10 pence piece. The machine had no chatter or misting of the screen or crackling from the speaker at all. I carried on for another three hours in the pouring rain



Munitions badge.

Detecting in pasture.



One of the small buttons.



The Simplex+ submerged.



Detecting in fresh-water.

– the only thing to play up was my pinpointer which had somehow got water in it and was having issues, as well as a hole I found in my wellington boot!

The area around the lake I had detected for some years and not had much in the way of historical finds, but plenty of coins and modern-day dog tags and trash, so I thought it was good place to test the Simplex. Keeping it in Park mode, I did dig a few ring-pulls, but no iron. The Simplex's Iron Volume is another bonus feature of this machine and one which I do like to have on a detector, especially a budget one.

I made my way back to the lake and headed into the water (with one wet

boot quickly filling up with water). I couldn't remember which mode to put the machine in whilst in the water, so I went for the Field mode option, to see if any would cause any falsing out. Now I know saltwater has a totally different effect on a machine compared to freshwater, but in the Field setting the Simplex worked a treat. Within a minute I found a dog tag (Gus, if anyone has lost one) under a couple of inches of thick silty mud with a banging signal. The simplex impressed me in the fresh-water as it was no different to detecting on land. The next test was how it managed saltwater...

Due to my location, I don't tend to

do much beach detecting but I was keen to see how the Simplex performed, so one day, after visiting a customer for my day job, I headed to a popular Essex beach.

I selected the Beach mode, ground balanced the machine which was a bit chattery at first on full sensitivity, so I knocked the ground balance down to 85 and re-balanced, plus notched it down two bars from the top on sensitivity. The machine was perfect with no chatter, so off I went on the semi-dry beach. Within five minutes I bumped into another detectorist, Alan, who told me he is an avid *Treasure Hunting* reader so I promised I'd give him a mention! Now don't get me wrong, I love talking to people, especially about metal detecting, but I was really limited on time and wanted to give the Simplex a thorough test, so I couldn't stop to natter. Once Alan and I had gone our separate ways, it was just a matter of minutes before I found a crisp 50p piece at around 4 inches. I did have slight issues with pinpointing, but this may have been due to the beach conditions where I was detecting as there was a lot of natural trash.

I headed into the wash whilst the tide was coming in having completely forgotten about the hole in my welly! The coil created a little chatter on entering the water, but after a few seconds it settled down and I detected happily along. I had a few iron signals

and ring pulls but nothing of particular interest – I would have loved to spend more time on the beach, but overall, I did find that the Simplex handled the beach well once I'd adjusted the ground balance settings.

The following week, back at work, I took the Simplex out into a forest area near my offices over a couple of lunch-times (with permission of course). This is a really good way of relaxing whilst at work if you ever get the chance. The area had originally been farmland, with conifers planted in the 1980s, a mossy / grassy, heavily composted surface and very light 'fluffy' damp under-soil. I initially used the Park mode, thinking this was probably best as it would no doubt have a lot of trash from the large car park near my offices. However, after a while I switched to Field mode where the machine soon picked up more signals and within minutes I began to get some positive signals but with slight interference. I suspected that this was from the coil being on full sensitivity and hitting the bark and wood debris, and indeed, when I knocked the sensitivity down a notch this cleared.

I had a strong signal of 55-58 and once again, the piercing tone. Despite



Detecting on estate grounds.

my work clothes, I pinpointed the target and dug down with my spade. Six inches down and smack bang in the centre of my hole was a lovely 1925 sixpence.

Now this is by no means an in-depth review of the Simplex as I have only been able to use it for a certain number of hours so far. But based on the different ground test conditions I have put this machine through, it really did impress me and I'd say it's a winner, especially at this price point. I have even used the features that would not normally be of benefit to me, such as using it at night in my garden with the LED spotlight, as well as the ability to choose the vibration mode which is really helpful for



Lovely 1925 sixpence.

those hard of hearing. As for the battery life from the internal USB rechargeable battery, I found this easily lasted me a good couple of sessions before it needed charging. I also used my USB power bank to charge the machine whilst detecting which is another nice feature. I especially like the way you do not need a cover over the main control box in the event of heavy rain, you can be confident it is truly waterproof.

All in all, considering all the options on the Simplex, this is a great value detector. For a beginner, you can literally just turn the machine on and set off and it will work very nicely. However, for us intermediate or experienced detectorists, a few tweaks and you have a machine that can give a bit more, whether it be depth or stability – the choice is yours. I still have much to learn about this machine and look forward to continuing to put it through its paces – watch out for an update in a future issue of *Treasure Hunting*.



Detecting on the beach I found a crisp 50 pence piece at around 4 inches.



Screen at night with LED spotlight.



Vibration setting, great for underwater and hard of hearing.