

THE MAGAZINE  
OF THE  
WORLD  
GOLDPANNING  
ASSOCIATION

# Golden Times

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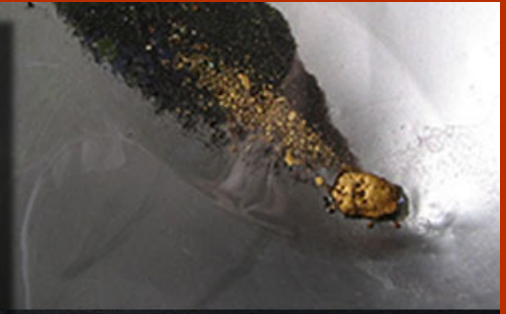
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### From the Editor ...

Welcome to our spring edition or autumn for our southern hemisphere readers! In fact, when one thinks of how global the WGA is, it is really quite amazing. As the team prepared this issue, emails have been flying from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, North America and most of Europe. Not only do we rely on modern technology to span the world we also travel there as well as can be seen from our front page article!

My thanks to those who have submitted items and we look forward to more as we prepare for the end of year edition. As you can see from this edition we have such interesting members and an amazing range of topics. I'm sure your adventures or hobbies will make good reading as well!

In Spain, we plan to have CD's containing the last 5 years of Golden Times as well as posters and flyers promoting Golden Times and our team on hand to answer questions and encourage you to put pen to paper or hand to keyboard.

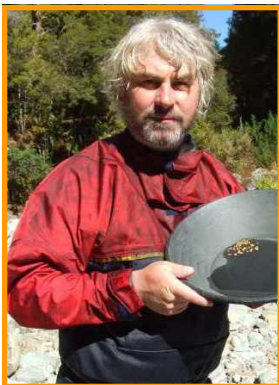
See you there!

To contact our editor staff please send to [wga\\_comms@yahoo.com](mailto:wga_comms@yahoo.com)



### Message from the President

Well the GoldenTimes team is really working now and we are enjoying a spring issue after the excellent 2007 autumn issue. My thanks to Paul and the new team and to all the people who have sent items and photographs to help them. In fact, so many people work hard and give up their time to give the WGA 'life' and make it the world's greatest gold panning network, it is just not possible to thank all of them. But I would like to. Many jobs are quiet and in the background, but they are as important as



the foundations of a house - unseen, but the house falls down without them!

I want to go on and talk to you about all the exciting developments going on at the moment, work that will make our association stronger, and about the exciting competitions coming up, but you can read about it all in the pages of Golden Times! So this time I will keep my message short - it's just a huge thank you to all of you who help with all the jobs that make us the really great organisation we are. I really do believe that we are a unique and probably slightly mad group, but isn't that wonderful!!

**Vincent Thurkettle  
President**



Dear Friends,

My mandate expires during next AGM in Spain and the General Assembly of Delegates is asked to elect a new Vice President. Before that time, let me tell you something about what was the major item I had to deal with during last months: the W.G.A. Statutes. Very soon you will read them from our web site!



The whole board, particularly during the last Spring meeting in Sweden at Ken's place, helped me very very much and I want to say a huge thank you to all of them for that. We can now say the Statutes are ready to be adopted and you can just imagine how

happy I am for being able to give our Association a proper instrument to lead, advice, help all our activities. When Vincent asked me to bring the issue as main target for Vice Presidency I was quite scared, but in the end you can call it a team-job, as I said before, because Vincent has also been working on them together with our former President Kauko Launonen and both Esko and Ken gave good advice. Also more than one Delegate, not many more (sigh!), gave me the opportunity to know what was the general thinking about them before the final version. Saying so, telling you about who are the writers and people that worked on them, my expectation is to have a fast-lane and acceptance of this first "piece of paper" that put our World organisation in legality and loyalty. We are a group of Friends and to spread friendships together with "gold" atmosphere is our ambition: now we can do that.

By the way, talking again to elect a new Vice President, the "old" one is available for another term, if you think he can do that...

See you in Spain,  
truly yours, Arturo



## Spring Board Meeting 2007

After the success of the first spring meeting in 2007 the WGA Board met again this spring in Sweden. Ken and Ulla Karlsson very kindly hosted the meeting in their home town, Kopparberg with the meeting taking place in the town hall, a very fine ancient wooden building. This meeting's main purpose was to develop the WGA's statutes. Work on the statutes was started by the last President, Kauko Launonen and has been the job of current Vice President Arturo Ramella. I also wanted us to look carefully at the way the competition rules are currently written, as I am aware that some nations are finding translating them difficult. This was not to make any changes to what the rules say, simply how they say it. Also the written rules currently are a blend of advice to organisers and panners. Many people feel it would be better if the rules were split into two parts, one for panners and one for competition organisers. Of course these two parts will need to be available to everybody. Finally the Board needed to consider very carefully how we are progressing with the plans to introduce a better, 'no tourists 'til Friday' elimination system and phase in a Classic pan official class.

This year again we worked over four days, but Ken and Ulla had some surprise breaks for us! The first was a trip to one of the worlds' most historically important copper mines and the other was a break for a fun competition. But even the competition had a serious side as we were using manufactured competition gold. This I find most interesting as it may well be a way forward for competition organisers in areas where finding gold-free gravel is extremely difficult. There have been problems at several world goldpanning competitions with 'wild' gold and even at this year's British Championships we had some 'wild' gold problems. (Britain has just decided to try out manufactured gold at our next championships.)

Gold panners love eating and I must note that Ken and Ulla provided a range of wonderfully tasty Swedish food – from Elk and salmon to the world famous meatballs! It was a real pleasure to work in such beautiful surroundings with such good hosts – thank you Sweden.

Vincent Thurkettle



Vincent Thurkettle tittar efter hur många guldkorn han hittat under vaskningens deltävling nummer ett. Med full pott och först att kasta hinken tog han förstaplatsen i deltävling ett.

# Ledande vaskare möttes i Kopparberg

**KOPPARBERG**  
Att vara en världsguldorganisation och få alla att enas under en och samma flagg är inte helt enkelt.

– Men en härlig utmaning, säger Vincent Thurkettle, president i WGA.

Det var inte enbart danskar som besökte Kopparberg under den glänsa helgen. En engelsman, en italiener, en finländare och en svensk, delar av styrelsen i World Goldpanning Association, WGA, tillbringade en stor del av helgen i byns tinghus. Mestadels med några nedtryckta i buntar av papper.

– Vi träffas en gång om året för att bland annat diskutera utvecklingen och spridningen av guldvaskning. Vi ska exempelvis se över hur tävlingarna kan göras mer rättvisa, säger styrelsens president Vincent Thurkettle.

– Vi vill också locka fler personer och länder till guldvaskningen. Att hitta sätt att göra guldvaskningen mer attraktiv, underhållande och professionell.

WGA:s styrelse har under helgen arbetat hårt med att gå igenom alla hörn av den stora organisationen. Från västern Esko Orava, Arturo Ramella, Vincent Thurkettle och Ken Karlsson.

Helgens möte handlar mycket om att gå igenom riksmekaper och de administrativa delarna av organisationens verksamhet. Det är nu det ska tänkas till ordentligt, allt för att underlätta nästkommande möte då representanter från alla världens hörn ska få ta del av vad som är på gång.

### Provtävling

Med på mötet är också vice president Arturo Ramella från Italien, kansli Esko Orava från Finland och kopparbergaren Ken Karl-



son, ordförande i tävlingskommittén. Alla med mångårig erfarenhet och en stor passion för just guldvaskning.

Vad gäller själva tävlandet är de överens om att det är den sociala biten som egentligen är det viktigaste – inte tävlingen i sig utan möjligheten att träffa nya och gamla vänner från hela världen som delar ens passion.

– Det här är verkligen något alla kan göra. En riktig familjeaktivitet, säger Thurkettle.

Under söndagen hölls också en inofficiell tävling i Rödbergsdal för att provvaska ett fabriktillverkat guld. Något som kan komma att användas i framtidens tävlingar, världen över.

Årets VM går av stapeln i Spanien i slutet av juli. I Sverige finns tre tävlingar att besöka under sommaren: i Kopparberg i juni och Långsavaara och Adelfors i juli.

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## World-famous gold centre starts from a shoe box, 35 years of the Gold Prospector Museum

**G**old Prospector Museum, located in the upper edge of Sodankylä municipality in Finnish Lapland, celebrates this year its 35th anniversary. Golden way has been a long one: the very first photos stored in a shoe box and random items



collected from the golden river banks of Lapland were the seeds of the world famous museum, which today presents, records and researches the worldwide gold history.

The Gold Prospector Museum was founded while only a few hermit veteran prospectors from the River Lemmenjoki who were responsible of keeping the tradition of gold prospecting alive in Lapland. Yrjö Korhonen and Niilo Raumala, both prospectors from Lemmenjoki, settled down at Tankavaara in early 70's. They founded a modest goldpanning site by the local Silver Creek and started to demonstrate and show the principles of goldpanning to the visitors. Fascinating gold stories and interesting gold history attracted also Kauko Launonen and Inkeri Syrjänen to come and stay in Tankavaara. The more these four pioneers fiddled with gold the stronger became the feeling that the captivating stories, tools and other signs from the riverbanks should not only urgently be documented but also displayed to the audience. This is how the story of Tankavaara Goldvillage, Goldmuseum and in



larger scale also the story of gold related tourism in Lapland came into being.

### **Gold and dreams in the Nut Cabin**

The ideas and dreams of Tankavaara gold pioneers were said aloud at the annual general meeting of the Gold Prospectors Association of Finnish Lapland in March 1973. The act of setting the museum up was recorded already to the minutes of the very same meeting. The



museum was seen to be essential for documenting the history: tradition, stories, methods and tools. Inkeri Syrjänen had a suitable education and was elected to take care of the challenging and interesting job of the museum director.

The museum's very first exhibitions were prospecting tools and other specimens collected from the gold-fields displayed at the corner of Tankavaara's modest summer time café. A

couple of years later the museum managed to supply an old nut shaped log cabin from the nearby nature park. The cabin was deblocked and transferred log by log to Tankavaara. The Nut Cabin was the museum's first own building providing space for the basic exhibition. Goldpanning site and examples of typical goldprospectors' dwellings were little by little built by the Silver Creek.

### **New basement and the presidential brickie**

In late 70's the goldmuseum's exhibitions were moved to a new, larger building. Härkäselän Kultala, originally built by the legendary gold mining company Lapin Kulta Ltd., was transferred from River Sotajoki to Tankavaara. The foundation stone was laid in 1977 during the very first World Goldpanning Championships in Tankavaara. The brickie was the most honourable guest Tankavaara could get, president Urho Kekkonen. This kind of special distinction from the state of Finland was very significant for the museum and brought lots of positive publicity not only for the museum but also for whole Lapland and gold tradition.

In 1981 the Gold Museum Association founded a background society to support and develop the museum. New challenges including new main building and expanding the operations were already planned. The gold museum's new building was completed during the following year and the new basic exhibition was inaugurated in 1983 to honour museum's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Museum's large stone and mineral collection was put on display at Härkäselän Kultala.

### **International Golden World – the story of gold and man**

In addition to diligent museum work and developing gold related tourism Tankavaara has had a remarkable role in



organizing and developing gold panning competitions since 1974 when the first Finnish Open was arranged. The event expanded year by year and the very first World Goldpanning Championships took place in 1977. For that Gold Prospector Museum got plenty of international attention. Valuable international bonds were established and museum received lots of documents and items abroad for its collections.

The idea of permanent exhibition covering the world wide gold history arose while the golden society became more international. Golden World exhibition presenting the gold traditions of more than 20 countries was opened in 1996 in the new gold pan-shaped wing. In Golden World one can get to know the most important international gold rushes or find detailed information about separate countries. Gold prospector Museum, especially the Golden World, is unique in its scale. The exhibition is constantly expanding and completing in cooperation with active gold societies. A stand for Russia among others is under consideration.

### Challenges for the future

Gold Prospector Museum has passed through a long and eventful path across the gold tradition. Work will go on: museum expands and develops. The biggest challenge in the near future will be the renewal of the basic exhibition presenting Finnish gold history. If everything goes as planned the inauguration will be in the summer 2009.



Museum was founded by the Gold Prospectors Association of Finnish Lapland. Since early 80's until now it has been maintained by the Goldmuseum Association. The next step to be taken this jubilee year is establishing the Goldmuseum Foundation to carry the operational and financial responsibilities of the museum. The articles of the foundation will be signed in August during 35<sup>th</sup> Goldpanning Finnish Open. The chairperson for the first period will be the Governor of Lapland, Mrs. Hannele Pokka. The Goldmuseum Association will continue its work as relief association supporting the museum and still carrying the main responsibility of organizing goldpanning competitions.

Inkeri Syrjänen, the mother of the museum since 70's, will well-deservedly retire from the 1st of May 2008. New director Heli Heinäaho-Miettunen has already worked at the museum for a bit less than a year and will lead the museum to its new challenges.

*Ulla Kettunen*

## Heli - the new director of Gold Prospector Museum

**Heli Heinäaho-Miettunen has worked as director at the Gold Prospector Museum nearly one year now. The baptism of gold was given to her during 34<sup>th</sup> Goldpanning Finnish Open in August 2007.**

The new director moved to Lapland from Northern Ostrobothnia, about 400 kilometres from Tankavaara. She says to feel like at home immediately. – I used to study years ago in Inari, in northern Lapland. When I left from there I swore I never move too south. And I have managed to keep this promise, she smiles.



*Heli being interviewed by Esko Ranta*

Aside from the northern location also the possibility for challenging museal work was the spark to apply for the job at the Gold Prospector Museum. Before Tankavaara Heli Heinäaho-Miettunen worked as a municipal secretary of cultural affairs and as an archaeologist also possesses experience from various projects of National Board of Antiquities.

### Challenges and fascinating gold stories

Heli Heinäaho-Miettunen got to know Tankavaara and Gold Prospector Museum while studying in early 90's. – Museum was so much smaller and more modest at that time. But I remember that we as students also knew its reputation as internationally known museum, she says.

How does the future of the museum look like for the new director? – The work seems to be very interesting. Gold Prospector Museum has lots of big challenges ahead, like establishing the Goldmuseum Foundation. It is a big step. What comes to our exhibitions the renewal of the basic exhibition is the most essential, Heli tells about museum's future targets.

Heli Heinäaho-Miettunen admits that before Tankavaara she didn't have any specific relation to gold. Symptoms of gold fever haven't become unbearable yet, even if she has already joked about having a claim of her own. – My love for gold is based more on museum aspects. Gold tradition and stories fascinate me more than gold as itself. I can see myself prospecting and panning but maybe more interviewing and collecting information and protecting old historically valuable gold areas.

*Ulla Kettunen*



## Just married!

**T**hat spring morning turned out to be a very special day for me...

My story starts a long time ago. Back in the 60's and 70's my gold-panning buddy on the various rivers was a certain Mr Marco Vignale who is currently manager of the San Paolo bank in Turin as well as being a mega galactic champion in the sport of bowls. Thirty-five years ago this was not so- in those days he was just an ordinary human being in search of dreams and serenity in the countryside. When he was getting married, he and his bride-to-be, who agreed to the project, dug through mountains of sand, with my willing assistance, until they had found enough gold with which to make their wedding rings. I also encouraged my daughter, Patrizia, and my son-in-law to do likewise and they laboured enthusiastically in the burning sun in order to obtain, together, their symbol of happiness.

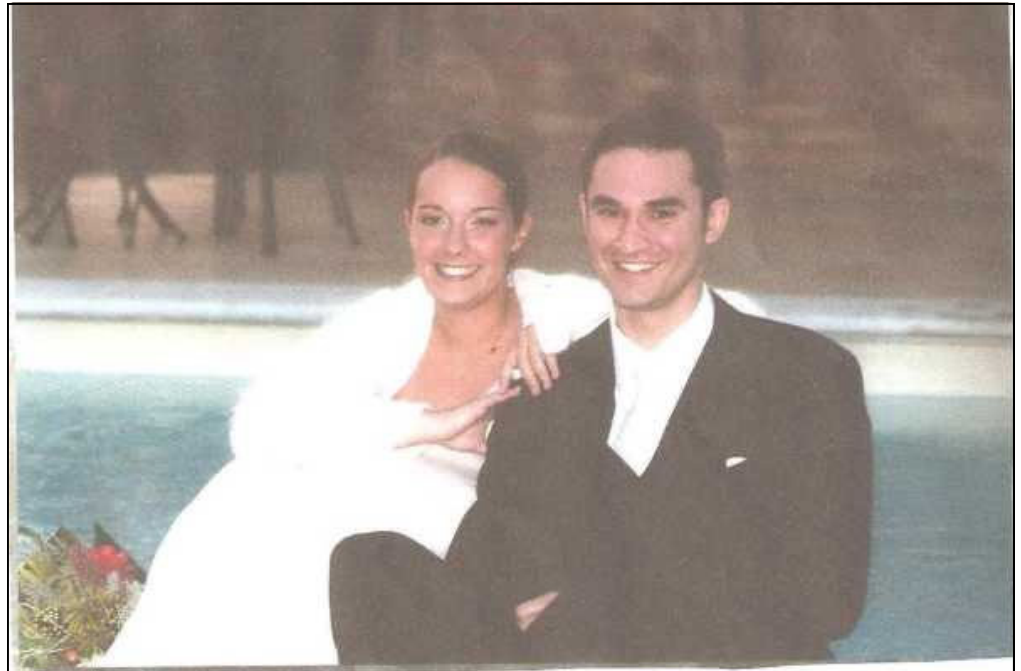
But to return to that spring morning of 2006 that I mentioned at the start:

I was awakened by a call from my ex-partner Marco, asking me to find a "little hole" rich enough in the raw material with which to create the wedding rings of his own daughter, Valentina, and her future husband. In this way they would take the same path taken by him and along which he had found harmony and serenity. For an event of such importance I found the "little hole" by the Elvo River. It was not excessively rich but was comfortable to work and had lots of sand and small pebbles.

The expedition was organised and, over the long weekend of May 1<sup>st</sup> that year, a little "tent-park" was erected at San Damiano di Carisio. Young and not so young gathered together, armed with shovels, picks, wheel-barrows and especially excellent bottles whose labels were extremely inviting. The hunt for the yellow metal was on! About 10 grams were needed in order to create the wedding rings and so the work had to be spread out over two consecutive days- due not in small part to those "inviting labels" which had a negative effect on labour output! On the second day we decided, with great reluctance, to adopt more of a mineral water approach and things went decidedly better. In the afternoon we had a great surprise; a friend of ours, Mr Pier Emilio Calliera had in-

formed the press of our activities and they arrived and subsequently wrote a very nice article, my copy of which I guard jealously to this very day.

What more could we have asked for? The gold had been found, the press had appreciated our intentions and... the "inviting labels" were now no more than simple pieces of paper glued to empty bottles! Everything had gone in the best possible of ways. As for me, even today as I look at the Elvo, I feel a sense of pride and interior well-being, thinking of those



three couples who wanted this river as a witness to their love; that shining band on the ring-finger will be an eternal symbol of that love. Only the river can give these sensations and our friend Elvo had outdone itself!

Who knows whether the good God will grant me the time to accompany any other couples along some water-course in their search for the true emblem of happiness... but even if this does not come about, I am happy just the same. Thank you Elvo!!!

By Ottavio Lora (veteran gold prospector and member of the Biella Goldpanners' Association)



## Stamps

Znamka, el cello, kirijepaperi, briefmark, postzegel are all nice foreign names for a simple stamp. Even though everybody uses e-mail nowadays, there is nothing as nice as receiving a greeting card from a far or strange country with a beautiful stamp on it. Often these stamps display the head of state, usually together with a nice image of for instance a landscape, mountain, airplane or building.

Many people keep an old album, a dusty box or something else with stamps in the attic. Stamps inspire peo-

ple, and some even continue to collect stamps. In the Netherlands alone there are about half a million people who actively collect stamps. These philatelists collect in many different ways. Some collect stamps from a specific country or continent, while others collect more thematically, such as stamps with flowers, space travel or sports.

I collect stamps myself since I was a kid, and goldpanning related stamps since I got gold fever. And to my surprise, there are many stamps with gold as main theme and very beautiful ones, too! In the old days it was necessary to visit dusty, badly lit rooms and browse through many books to find one particular stamp. Nowadays using e-bay gives a variety of magnificent stamps displayed on your screen in just a few mouse clicks.

There are thus many goldpanning-stamps from different countries. Some are released to celebrate the 100 year jubilee of a gold rush or fall into the category early settlers, while others are released because gold is a part of the national history, for example South-Africa. In Goldkronach at the 20<sup>th</sup> German Championships I noticed a beautiful stamp from Finland, but unfortunately someone else bought it before I could. After a chat with the friendly German salesman it turned out that he brought his entire portfolio of golden stamps, displaying nuggets, goldmines, goldbars and goldpanners! He told me there are many other panners collecting stamps and showed me his collection. He owned one particular stamps which he bought for only 150 DM (~ € 80), which is a lot of money for a small piece of serrated paper of 1.5 by 2 cm in my opinion.



I prefer the ones showing a man with the pan and have collected a number of them from different countries like America, Canada, Chili and Africa. One from Suriname showing a "Potknokker" (Suriname for goldpanner) and a series of four stamps from former Yugoslavia, where a group of panners is working with a traditional pan in the river Pek. Another nice one is from New Zealand; if you scratch the paint from the panners pan you'll find real gold!!! One of my favourites is a first day envelope from America together with the legendary story about "The lost Dutchmen's goldmine". Really a magnificent setting complete with pickaxe, treasure map and skull. I also own a handwritten envelope about the gold rush centennial around the Panama canal with four stamps and an original coffee stain from 1949!

So, for the time being, I am nowhere near finished with collecting goldpanning stamps. And what is more fun on a rainy Sunday afternoon than to be busy with your favourite hobby with next to the warm heater?

Frenk Hink







## AFRICAN GOLD

Africa has always been mysterious – the “Dark Continent” – and only in recent times has it begun to reveal its secrets. Oral myths and legends abound, but Africa’s known history really only began with the Egyptian civilization.

The Muslims arrived in Egypt from Arabia in the late 7th century A.D. Dynasties, such as the Berber, Ottoman and Sharifian, rose and fell across Northern Africa, but Egypt had the greatest continuous influence on the brown and black peoples higher up the Nile in Nubia. Gold probably was mined in the Yemen and Arabia or traded in the Land of Punt and the Sabaean Kingdom, and brought back to Egypt.

The desert was crisscrossed by tribes, such as the Garamantes, in search of gold dust, slaves and ostrich feathers, in exchange for salt, copper, kola nuts and other commodities. Senegal and ancient Ghana became centers for gold “trading” in North Africa, rather than of gold “mining”, alluvial gold having been brought from further south. The merchants of Mali ruled this trade from 1307 to 1337, centered on Mali, Timbuktu and Gao, but the Mali Empire and its trans-Saharan trade declined in the 15th century.

The city of Meroe, in the monarchy of Cush (Kush), had also become the earliest center of iron-working in Africa, these skills being carried further by migrating tribes. Meroe collapsed, possibly because of the vast increase in population and the subsequent denudation of vegetation due to overgrazing and the need for vast quantities of firewood. This disastrous pattern would be repeated over and over again all over Africa.

Regular coastal trade on the African east coast was established as early as the 1st Century A.D. Tribes had moved southward from Nigeria and the Cameroon – one such migration down the western coast, whilst another moved eastwards and south. From the 10th century, Arabic references to Sofala and Kiliwa become frequent. Gold from the interior was traded as Arab traders had to move into the interior to obtain slaves, as tribesmen, fearing for their safety, were no longer keen visit the coast. All eastern coastal trade, both in slaves and gold, peaked during the 15th century.

India had developed a thriving trade with east Africa and a Chinese presence is also recorded – between the years 1417-1419 the first Chinese expedition had reached Malindi; the second Chinese expedition (1421-1422) only reached Mogadishu on the Somalian coast.

By the 14th century a wealthy and powerful state had developed in the region between the Zambezi and the Limpopo Rivers - that ruled by the Mwene Mutapa (“Ravager of Lands”). It is postulated that the Dravidians from India had a major influence in the mining of gold

deposits in the Karanga Empire (present day Zimbabwe).

Trade escalated, the southern regions of Africa were being explored and settled by migrating tribes; deposits of copper, iron ore and alluvial gold were being exploited, even as far as Broederstroom in the present Transvaal; all the while, the migration southwards continued, fuelled by the need for new grazing grounds or to escape other warlike tribes, displacing the original San and Khoi peoples.

A portion of this history has only now come to light, with the investigation of a mysterious settlement long known to Africans, but only discovered in 1932 by Europeans – that of graves containing artifacts such as gold beads and a truly magnificent golden rhino, on top of a mountain known as Mapungubwe (“place of the jackal”). It would appear that this settlement was built before that of Greater Zimbabwe across the Zambezi. Why the population moved away from Mapungubwe and back to the north, is open to conjecture. Many theories abound – one being that a small Ice Age had covered large portions of southern Africa - but it is more likely that vegetation became denuded and soil became poorer, leading to smaller crops; a change of climate to drier and hotter conditions and a lack of water may also have caused this abandonment; a clue to this is the name of a more northerly settlement - “Phalaborwa” - meaning “better than the South”.

News of the fabulous kingdom of “Monomotapa” had by now reached Europe. The Portuguese, desirous of developing their own trade in spices and gold, were spurred on to undertake the unknown and dangerous navigation of Africa, reducing their dependence on Arabian traders. The Dutch and English were not far behind, and Africa became the focal point of European interest, at first only as a refreshment station on a long voyage, but later as a trading and expansion opportunity.

The discovery of gold in America, Canada and Australia, the exciting tales and the ancient recorded presence of “gold in Africa”, resulted in a wave of prospecting, starting during the 1850’s, and given impetus by the need of the fledgling Transvaal Republic to become self-sufficient.

A new chapter was added to the history of Africa and names, such as Pilgrim’s Rest, Barberton and the Witwatersrand, would become household words across the world, and centuries later gold is still being mined throughout Africa.

Elna Gundry





## Sand of God

Goldpanning in South Africa is mostly on a competition level. Apart from the demonstrations in one or two rivers, our generation has never experienced what it would be to work on a claim and take out gold and we can not imagine what it would be to make a living out of it. So last year we heard about diggings in our neighbour country Mozambique, and decided that we must go and have a look.

When we arrived in the town close to the diggings it was not difficult to find out where it was, everybody had an idea and pointed us in a general direction. We drove a couple of kilometres on a dirt road before we



were used. It is very hard work and not for the faint hearted. At the end of a day they have about ten buckets of sand to wash. Here I was even more surprised to see that they use an ordinary plastic bowl for this task.

We showed them our pans and some techniques, which was on the other hand an eye opener to the panners. I must admit, after an hour I was very tired, (and I did not even take out my own gravel!) and all signs of gold fever weathered off.

When we left with promises of future visits, it was with mixed emotions.



In Mozambique, mining for gold, without permits and licenses is

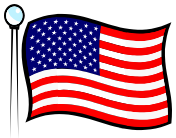


reached a small community. We met a man next to the road and asked him about the gold. "Yes he said, he knows about the sand of God." It ended up he is a store owner and sells some of the gold himself. While Coen and Skippie was talking to the all the interested men around the car about gold panning competitions and pans, I was invited into the shop, The man took a banknote from his pocket and opened it, and there and then I had gold fever all over again, I was shivering and couldn't speak, but well know that I shouldn't touched it, or even think about buying it. We were there to see the diggings and to experience the panning. The friendly man and his friends took us to the panning site where we were amazed to see how they actually take the gravel out. No machinery and the minimum tools

also illegal, the government however turned a blind add eye to this very poor community who utilizes the natural resources to heir own benefit. Trading and buying of gold is also not above board, therefore we did not even think about it. But an hour at the "diggings" gave me a little bit more insight on life in Pilgrim's Rest 130 years ago. I also know we have changed the panners' lives by introducing a proper pan to them and they definitely touched my life as well. I often think about the shop owners words for gold -the sand of God. Back home I looked at the pictures and was once again surprised to see the resemblance to pictures I've seen in Pilgrim's Rest before.

Sonja Vermaak





# CALIFORNIA STATE GOLD PANNING CHAMPIONSHIPS

**September 1-2 2007 at Forest Hill Heritage Celebrations.**

Ready, Set, Go! Stopwatches clicked and the panners take off, as fired from a cannon. It is the Labor Day weekend and the State Championships are off and running. For the past five years, the California State Championships have been held as part of the Heritage Festival at Forest Hill. The Heritage Fair also includes the California Lumberjack Championships. This combination certainly represents the historic past of mining and logging. Over 2,500 people visiting, participating and cheering on their favourites in the gold panning and logging events.



The US, and specifically California, had almost 20 panners participating in the World Gold-panning Championships in Dawson City – Yukon territory, and these panners returned just in time to be part of the California State Championships.

There were only two days separating the end of the World Championships and the begin-

ning of the State event.

This group included Mike Sutton, a former World Champion, Don Robinson, a two-time National Champion, Carroll Ebbitt and Barbara Sutton, both previous State Champions.

Just about every previous champion was in attendance, and almost 180 other panners determined to show just how good they really are.

These Championships have various divisions of panning, giving everyone a chance to participate. They are the Juniors – Beginners – Skilled Women and Men – Veterans and Team events.

Saturday, saw the first of the preliminary panning in order to determine those who would advance to the Finals next day. Once into the Skilled level, the competition is fierce! Good friends shake hands and then determined to beat out their best pal. Friendships fade immediately when the starter says "go"! This was a fight for survival.

On Sunday, the top 12 panners advanced to the semi-final level in the Skilled Women, Men and Veteran categories. The amount of river gravel was increased to three gallons instead of two, and the gold was smaller, making the going really tough.

The top six three-person Teams were already determined on Saturday. The semi finals had six panners going head to head with the top three advancing to the finals. Talk about pres-



*Team USA at the 2007 World Championships*

sure....! Try it sometimes and look around at your competition. Its almost like looking across and seeing Billy the Kid, Sheriff Matt Dillon, Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp looking back at you. It can definitely get the adrenalin flowing!

At the end of the 2 day event, the final result of the medal competition was as follows -

#### JUNIORS –

- Gold - Hailey Hassen
- Silver – William Batterfeld of Grass Valley
- Bronze – Katie Heffner of Roseville

#### BEGINNERS –

- Gold - Brian Reed – Beale AFB
- Silver – MaryAnn McGinnis of Santa Rosa
- Bronze – Philip Caffey Richardson TX

#### VETERANS –

- Gold – Mike Sutton of Redding
- Silver - George Reidenbach of Sacramento
- Bronze – Don Robinson of Iowa Hill

#### WOMEN'S SKILLED –

- Gold - Anne Doran of Eddington – Victoria – Australia
- Silver – Denise Gilbrech Martinez
- Bronze – Barbara Cardoza of Elk Grove

#### MEN'S SKILLED –

- Gold – Chris Farrell of Eldorado
- Silver – Jim Eakin of Plymouth
- Bronze – Ken Gilbrech

#### TEAMS –

- Gold – "3 Flakes": Hollie Watson, Ramsey Gallegos, George Reidenbach
- Silver – "49ers": Mike Sutton, Barbara Sutton, Don Robinson
- Bronze – "Goldfinger": Ken Gilbrech, Denise Gilbrech, Katie Gilbrech

Results provided by Don Robinson.  
by Joe Cardoza.

Photos





## Anne brings home gold for Australia

Australian goldpanners Henry and Anne Doran of Eddington, Victoria attended the 2007 World Gold Panning Championships in Dawson City, Yukon, Canada during August 20 to 26<sup>th</sup> 2007. Henry and Anne hail from the heart of the Golden Triangle in central Victoria and have attended 7 World Gold

Panning Championships in the past. Both panned well at Dawson and made it to the Finals. A first for both Henry and Anne.

On the way home, they traveled to northern California to attend the California National Gold Panning Championships at Forest Hill on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> September. Anne won 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Skilled Women and received her gold medal which will add to her collection.



## 14<sup>th</sup> AUSTRALASIAN GOLDFANNING CHAMPIONSHIPS



Held at Sovereign Hill – Ballarat on 1 and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2007.

The Championships were held over a 2 day weekend. Weather was good on both days.

Sovereign Hill offers an ideal background, as the area is set in a reproduction of the 1850s goldfields including colonial buildings, tent city, mining equipment like the long toms or sluice boxes. Underground mine and associated buildings. Crafts are demonstrated like the tin-smith, potters, sweets manufacture, candle makers, coopers, wheelwrights, old draught horses, old fashioned bakeries and eating saloons. There is also an impressive gift shop, so you can buy your special piece of gold, as a memento from the Ballarat goldfields.

A total of around 50 panners – including a panner from Darwin – N.T. battled it out.

The Finals on Sunday were panned off with some stiff

competition, as panners tried to get one of the many great prizes for the winners.

### **Trans Tasman Silver Cup (Perpetual Trophy)**

A team of 6 New Zealand panners made the journey across the Tasman Sea to contest their cup, which they have won on a number of occasions. Competition was fierce between the Kiwis and Aussies with the 3 men Australian team called "Australian Bushwackers" Henry Doran – Tom Calvert – Dylan Calvert beating their friendly neighbours. Each year, the Tasman Cup creates a lot of interest.



### **Results – December 2007**

Under 12: 1. Rhiannon Binks, 2. Amelia Gatward-Ferguson (Tas), 3. Lachlan McDonald

Under 17: 1. Dylan Calvert, 2. Tom Cooper, 3. Amelia Gatward-Ferguson (Tas)

Women Novice: 1. Sharon Kemp, 2. Linda Warren, 3. Francine Gilbert

Men Novice: 1. Joe Cameron, 2. Dale Rosenow, 3. Frank Ford

Veterans: 1. Giulio Rasmini, 2. Henry Doran, 3. Kevin Lockman

Women Skilled: 1. Anne Doran, 2. Amanda Gatward-Smith (Tas), 3. Felicia Binks

Men Skilled: 1. Henry Doran, 2. Scott Cooper, 3. Peter Cox

Eureka Challenge: 1. Marcus Binks, 2. Tom Calvert, 3. Peter Cox

Teams: 1. Kiwi Magic (Tas), 2. Bushwackers (Aus), 3. Ballan Bushrangers

Trans Tasman Trophy - Australia Bushwackers

Open Pairs: 1. Tom & Dylan Calvert, 2. Kevin Lockman & Marcus Binks, 3. David & Amanda Gatward-Ferguson (Tas).

Information provided by Anne Doran - Australia



## Following the traces of ancestors and gold



*“The meanest 32 miles in history” wrote the man during the gold rush. I agree.”*



It was the year of 1996 when I had first time a chance to visit Klondike gold fields. I was impressed. Everywhere you were able to see the traces of gold history and Dawson City was greatly restored. I also visited the ghost town of Dyea in Alaska where the famous route to Klondike starts. I had read about Chilkoot Trail and was fascinated of the stories of this old merchant trail of Tlingit Indians. Thousands of people used it during the first years of gold rush in 1897-98 to reach Klondike.

The Chilkoot Trail ends at Lake Bennett after 55 kilometers but those who wanted to get to Klondike needed there a boat in

order to continue the trip by water another 900 kilometers. In those days it might have taken even a year to clarify this hard and demanding journey. Many people turned back.

We all know those famous pictures of the chain of men climbing over the steep and icy Chilkoot Pass. Very soon after rush was on the photographs spread all over the world and became as the symbols of Klondike gold rush. In the movie 'Gold Fever' of Charles Chaplin there is the thrilling scenes of people's efforts in clambering the escalation. Many people have read the adventures of Uncle Scrooge or Lucky Luke who also used the trail to get to Klondike.

When I stood in Dyea cemetery in that day watching the start point of trail I promised to myself that one day



*“On the top there is always snow and ice.”*

I will come back to walk the trail.

### **Uncle Herman – a gold miner**

As soon I got back home I found a book about Skandi-

### **Chilkoot Trail – reitti rikkauksiin**

Maailman tunnetuin reitti kultamaille on Chilkoot Trail, jota tuhannet ihmiset käyttivät päästäkseen käsiksi Klondiken rikkauksiin kultaryntäyksen alkuvuosina 1897-98. Kuvat miesjonosta nousemassa ylös lumista ja jäistä rinnettä suurien pakaasien kanssa levisivät pian maailmalle ja muodostuivat koko kultaryntäyksen symboleiksi.

Reitti saa alkunsa Dyesta, Alaskasta ja 55 kilometrin jälkeen päättyy viimein Lake Bennett –järvelle Kanadan puolelle. Kultakentille mielivien piti kuitenkin vielä saada sieltä vene alleen ja jatkaa lähes 900 kilometriä vesiteitse. Tuolloin jokaisen täytyi raahata mukanaan ruokaa ja tarvikkeita vuoden tarpeiksi ja rankat sääolosuhteet venyttivät usein matkaa kuukausia kestäväksi koettelemukseksi. Monet kääntyivät takaisin, joidenkin kohtalon sinetöi lumivyöryt, paleltuminen tai suistuminen jyrkältä rinteeltä.

Nykyisin reitti on virkistyskäytössä, joskin kävijämäärät ovat rajoitettuja ja erinäiset luvat täytyy hoitaa kuntoon ennen lähtöä. Kesäkelillä taival taittuu muutamissa päivissä normaalivarusteiden kanssa. Sade ja sumu ovat enemmän sääntö kuin poikkeus ja karhujen runsas esiintyminen alueella tuo oman jännityksensä vaellukseen.

Korkealla Chilkoot –solan ympäristössä on säilynyt jälkiä suuresta kultaryntäyksestä. Vaijerihissin jäänteet, mökin romahtaneet rauniot, lapiot, säilykepurkit, jopa vanha kengänraato kertovat omaa tarinaansa. Jokainen esine on tarkoin numeroitu ja niihin ei saa koskea tai siirtää alkuperäiseltä paikalta. Näin tulevillakin sukupolvilla on vielä mahdollisuus nähdä jäänteitä syrjäisessä erämaassa maailmaa muuttaneesta huikasta tapahtumasta.

Pirjo Muotkajärvi



navian people in Canada and Alaska during the gold rush. To my surprise there were a short story of my great grand uncle – Herman – who was digging a gold at least near Fairbanks but most likely also participated to the Klondike gold rush. The book also told that he died in 1928 felled by tree and first it was suspected to be as a revenge murder by gang of hijackers who was recently trespassing his house after booze and money – in vain since Herman managed to hide his money and himself. He reported about this to the police. Without any evidences the case, however, declared as an accident.

My father told me that he remembers the stories of 'American legacy' in 1930s. It took two years from Alas-



*“Some hundred of thousands of people started their journey to Klondik’e, some third of them got there – only a few of them got rich.”*

kan officers to find distant relatives far in Finnish Lapland. Tale tells that the men of family wasted whole legacy having a couple of months happy, drunken time.

Before the book I even didn't know about Herman existing. I tried to get further information about him but had no luck.

Now I had two good reasons to return to Klondike – Chilkoot Trail and Herman.

### **A decade later**

Finally, ten years later I was planning the trip to Canada and Alaska with my husband as Dawson City would host the World Goldpanning Championships in August 2007.

Eight months earlier we made a reservation to the Chilkoot Trail as the amount of hikers in the trail is limited.

We also started again to study the destiny of Herman. It was a great surprise to find him in internet – many hits. “How to Find Your Gold Rush Relative: Sources on the Klondike and Alaska gold rushes 1896-1914” is a database of many different sources. As we knew how hard Finnish names are written we tried dozen of different ver-

sion of “Herman Muotkajärvi” and finally one version matched in 1910 United States Federal Census when he lived in Fairbanks, Alaska with another Finnish man “Isaac Petterson”. Same census ten years later showed that he was still living near Fairbanks, now alone in ‘fine, big house’ (homestead of 130 hectare) and got his livelihood in farming and timbering.

Third hit told that he died in 21.11.1928 and was buried in Fairbanks – no name of cemetery but location was mentioned ‘N.E. Quarter # 51. Just to try our luck we sent a message to “Alaska Gold Forum” chat in order to ask what cemetery it would be and would it possible to find the grave. It was a great surprise to receive the several answers 16 hours later with information that it is ‘Clay Street cemetery’ and pictures of cemetery plot map and plot location with statement “Ya probably ought to make the 300 mile trip to bring him a headstone”.

With these information we decide it's worth to pay a visit to Fairbanks during our journey.



*“The landscape was impressing and weather unusually beautiful.”*

### **Chilkoot Trail – finally**

In August 2007 we took a plane and flew 10 000 kilometers from Finland to Whitehorse, the capital of Yukon. The bus and an old train took us to Skagway and after obligatory registration to the local ranger we started a long-awaited trip along the Chilkoot Trail.

A modern camp equipment weighted less than 20 kg per person but we had to carry several liters of water with us as it must have been purified with tablets because of beaver fever. I really didn't dare to complain when thinking people during the gold rush – they had to carry food, supplies and equipment of one year before they were even allowed to cross the Canadian border in mid way of the trail. It meant about burden of 800 kilograms to everyone. The demand seems to be unreasonable but – no doubt – it saved many novices starving to death in the ruthless wilderness of Canada.

We were told that the weather in the trail was usually bad or very bad – but the sun was shining and temperature was + 20 Celsius and it lasted throughout the whole trip. I was a little bit worried about the bears. We were advised what to do if we'll meet some and I was carrying the 'bear spray'. In Lapland we have hardly any bears and I have ever seen one – like most of the Finnish. The bear warning was given most of the trail.

The first day we planned to hike over 20 kilometers to the Sheep Camp. The path was narrow but quite easy going in the rain forest. We were enjoying the beautiful landscape but fresh traces and droppings of the bears made me a little bit nervous. But after mid day it was getting easier as you started to be so tired that didn't care anymore who or what you would meet.

Cooking is allowed only in those marked camps, open fire is forbidden and you never should leave your backpack alone, not even for one second. All trash and possible leftovers you should take with you in closed plastic bags. We were now in bear country. We also noticed that our camp cooker made in Finland didn't co-operate with an American fuel as the flames rose up to one and a half meters. Now and then we thought we saw some minor traces of gold rush like thick wire in steep hills which was probably used as an aid when climbing.

After nine hours we arrived to Sheep Camp, had a modest dinner, place the backpacks in to the locked bear boxes, set the tent and conked out into our sleeping bags.

### Golden Stairs

Next morning we woke up at 4 a.m. and less that two hours later we were on our way toward the Chilkoot Pass which we were going to cross along the 'Golden Stairs'. Soon the path started to slope upwards, higher and higher, trees ended and ground was covered by stones. We reached the 'Scales' where in the old days the supplies were weighted and those who didn't have enough had to turn back. Suddenly we saw tens and tens of artifacts from the heydays of gold rush; shovels, cans, bones, even a shoe, ruins of tram and cabin. Up there, in dry and calm they were preserved well. Closer look showed us that every object was numbered and we were warned beforehand that one should not touch or move any of those. It felt fascinating and comforting to think that also future generation would still have chance to see these traces of the event which changed in it's way even the history of world.

Climbing up along the Golden Stairs, steep Golden Stairs was slowly and difficult. I found it hard to find the foothold in the middle of big pile of stones and we often faced the dead end. Heavy backpack swayed the balance and I made almost a



*"The Scales – the burdens were weighted here during"*

fatal mistake in having a look down – it made me so dizzy that I almost fell down. I wondered how many people got killed in 1890s when hundreds of men were ascending on line along the steep, icy slope when one felled down taking along tens of those behind him like in domino phenomenon. In those days even winter brought temperature – 40 Celsius, heavy wind, short days and avalanches many didn't want to wait when they were rushing after gold.

Finally we reached the top in the high of kilometer. Landscape is breathtaking, colors unbelievable bright and far ahead one could see the cabin of Canadian border guard. There was no one in the cabin and we continued the journey in skiing down hills with our shoes, falling now and then. An old corpse of boat and some tools can still be seen.

### Happy Happy Camp

When reaching the Happy Camp we noticed it had



*"On the top of the Chilkoot Pass there is still a ranger cabin."*

taken some eight hours to hike ten kilometers. I understood the name of the Camp. After lunch we decided to continue still another 9 kilometers to Lindeman Lake where we arrived early evening pretty exhausted. We haven't seen anyone in that day and there was no one else at the tent site.

We put our backpack up to bear pool of 9 meters and set the tent. We noticed the Rangers station situates some hundreds of meters from the tent



site. There were two rangers who kindly offered us possibility to use one of their tent cabin as it's recommend to walk and camp with group of four or more – and there were only two of us. We gratefully took the offer and probably I have never slept better than in that night safe inside of four wooden wall, soft superlon matrix under the mosquito net after hiking of 13 hours.

Next morning we had breakfast together with Rangers in their nice cabin. We really enjoyed in hearing their stories about life, nature and hunting in this large wilderness. I have noticed so many similarities compared to Lapland with nature, landscape, animals, lakes and rivers – everything is just bigger, wider and larger here. Our talk turned to gold and they told that tomorrow author and researcher of gold history, Michael Gates, would come to study an old cemetery here. How small world is – I have met him first time already 14 years ago in Finland!

On of the tent cabin in the station there were the most interesting exhibition of gold history where we could have spend for hours but we should have been in the Log Cabin by afternoon – 15 kilometers more. My back groaned when trying to rise the backpack and my legs didn't follow my orders anymore. But there is no any other way out here but walking. The weather was like a milk and landscape in Bear Loon out of this world. Must stopped to admire. Last eight kilometers we walked by the side of an old trail way. We were relieved: now it has been done, now it has been seen.

**Fairbanks – town of friendly people**

After successful trip over the Chilkoot Trail we took a motor home and aimed to Fairbanks chasing the traces of Uncle Herman.

After visiting tourist info and couple of town offices we found ourselves in Clay Street cemetery with Frank who voluntary takes care of that cemetery trying to find the grave of Herman. It was not a simple job – we had two cemetery plot maps which didn't quite match each other and the flood in 1967 has flushed many crosses and stones away. After couple of hours of searching and creeping we actually found few neighbour graves with names and finally in the middle of them the headstone under the grass where the name was worn away. According the both maps it must be the grave of Herman. I stood there thinking his life and death and was a little bit touched.

We agreed to meet Frank again later in the cemetery. Meanwhile we visited estate office to ask nowadays address where Herman lived in 1920. They were very helpful – one of them has a husband with Finnish roots

and name was very Finnish-like. With their advice we visited the local newspaper and try to visit library where old newspapers were on microfilms.

As the library was closed for that day we visited private museum Historic Hall. We were told that the owner Candy "will know everything worth to know about history of Fairbanks" and this pleasant lady found

an information of Herman's homestead from her data base. Next morning we visited library and tried to find article about Herman when somebody knocked my shoulder asking if we are those two Finnish who are looking for information about their relatives. He was Rex – retired history professor from the university who has written a book of gold miners who died in the turn of the century. We were amazed. It seemed that whole town knows about us doing their best to help. Rex helped us to find several newspaper article about Herman and his death and funerals as well as information of homestead. In those days Alaska had a system that state gave a land to the people with minimum costs and they had to build a house and farm. After couple of years they had a chance to buy it themselves.

The articles confirmed our supposition that Herman was a gold miner. He came to north during the Klondike gold rush so more likely he has participated to the event and later we found out that his friend with whom he had lived in Fairbanks owned three claims in Klondike in the begin of 1900s. After Klondike he was washing for gold in the claim of Clarence Berry in Esther Creek in Fairbanks. Berry was one those rare people who made their fortune in gold. Later he moved to California establishing oil company "Berry Petroleum Company" which is still living and kicking.

We went back to Candy's museum in order to thank her once again and saying goodbye. When we opened the door we heard her saying "Speak of the Devil!" To our great surprise – again – we were told that the man – Paul – who just came to museum by accident recognized my uncle's name when Candy mentioned about



*"With a lot of luck and help we found the grave of Uncle Herman dates back in 1928"*



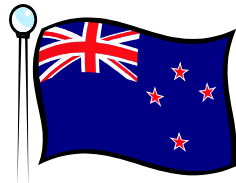
*"Fortunately we didn't meet this madam along the Chilkoot Trail but on our way to Skagway by car."*

us to him. Paul got his old plot maps and yes, there were marked two big pieces of land for name Herman Motka. Then he prompted us to jump his car and drove some ten kilometers to northwest from Fairbanks, stopped the car and announced us to be in the land which belonged to Herman. Now there were some houses and fenced army area. We walked along the Chena River and Paul told us that probably Herman's house was built by the side of the river and more likely it does not exist anymore.

Finally we went back to the cemetery and with help of Frank changed entire brick as a tombstone to the Herman's grave and placed the sign which we have brought from Finland. We put the flowers on the grave and kept a silent moment saying goodbye to Herman. In day and a half we had got all the information left about him and found his grave and former land.

I was still amazed of our luck and grateful for the kind people in Fairbanks when we took our motor home and left the town for Dawson City – looking forward to visit the gold claims there and of course to chase the medals of World Goldpanning Championships.

Pirjo Muotkajärvi, Finland  
(All photographs are from the archive of Pirjo Muotkajärvi and Jouko Korhonen. 'Old photographs' are taken from the exhibition in Lindeman Lake).



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF GOLD DISCOVERY IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's first gold discovery was in 1852 on the Coromandel Peninsula in the North Island – across the Hauraki Gulf from Auckland. This was short lived because most of the gold was encased in quartz but resurfaced a decade later nearby at Thames where a big strike of reef gold saw 700 productive mines established with a population of 18,000 miners. The total output exceeded 600 tonnes.

From Thames the discoveries spread throughout the peninsula which became known to the world as the Hauraki Goldfields. The Martha, at Waihi was one of the world's great gold mines. Before it closed in 1952 it had developed 161 km of tunnels and sunk its shafts to 582.4m. Its total production of gold and silver was 35,523,768 ounces.

The first real rush in 1856 was to the Aorere River, Collingwood, in the extremely isolated north-west corner of the South Island. It was a very small rush of about 2,500 people probably because of the difficulty of access to the area. Most came and went by boat.

As prospectors fanned out from the Collingwood field good deposits were found in several widely separated parts of the rugged, heavily forested mountains in this north-western corner of the South Island. Being so widespread, these Nelson goldfields kept the hardier diggers in practice for the grand discoveries yet to come.

In December 1857, surveyor, JT Thomson saw gold in the Lindis Valley and in 1861 a group of road workers set off an abortive rush of a few hundred diggers. At about this time Gabriel Read, following a gossip lead, his instinct and local advice discovered the little valley, later named Gabriel's Gully where he saw "gold shining like stars in the Orion on a dark frosty night". The date was 23 May, 1861

On reporting this find to the Superintendent of Otago, Gabriel was paid double the promised award for his discovery and subsequently went home to his quiet life in Tasmania.

By then at least 23,000 diggers had deserted the Victorian fields and sailed to Otago.

Two of these "Californians" made an even bigger find in the winter of 1862 when Horatio Hartley and Christopher Reilly struck rich alluvial gold on a beach about 160km up the Clutha River near the present town of Cromwell. These miners accumulated a fortune at a rate limited only by the speed at which they could work. The gold in the gravel was so rich these men did not bother with any ground unless it promised them at least 0.5 kg of bullion a day.

By December 1862 these Dunstan Diggings had produced 70,000 ounces of gold.

To reach the gravel under the deeper water miners eventually developed suction dredges, spoon dredges





mounted on barges and the world's first bucket-chain dredges.

At their peak in 1900 there were 187 dredges on the river...

Late in 1862 the 'secret' gold discovery by Bill Fox inland at the foot of the Southern Alps was revealed which caused a rush to The Arrow and later the Shotover Rivers.

By the end of the century the province of Otago had seen the rise of at least 80 separate goldfields including alluvial gold and many gold-quartz reefs.

In 1863 the Marlborough Province offered a reward for the discovery of a payable gold goldfield and that Easter 4 men returned from the Wakamarina River with 18 oz of gold. The rush was on. The field was soon swamped with miners and although this river could well have been the richest in the world, lawlessness, floods and the newly discovered West Coast goldfields caused most inhabitants to leave.

In 1864 two Maoris accidentally discovered gold in a river after levering a large boulder of greenstone (jade) from its resting place to find coarse yellow gold in the hollow where it had rested. This discovery set off one of the world's great gold rushes which, at its height, provided dazzling new finds nearly every week. This little known wilderness was destined to produce 2,500,000 ozs of gold. By the end of the century the total would exceed 200 tonnes.

Towns of 4000 persons would spring up virtually overnight only to be deserted shortly after to spring up elsewhere in the dense bush all along the coast. Access was mainly by boats (some didn't make it) and the wet, misty conditions were added to with the misery of sandflies and mosquitoes but for all its hazards and hardships, the West Coast goldfield was a bonanza. Several men dug up their own weight in gold and one small creek alone produced more than 8 tonnes. After panning and sluicing came the dredges - 150 of them.

From 1857 to 1905 the West Coast produced gold totalling 6,552,502 ozs (204 tonnes). An underground mine at Waitutu, on a quartz lode discovered in 1905, later added nearly 20 tonnes.

It should be noted that most original gold finds in NZ were made by the native Maori who passed the information on to other prospectors. Most were more interested in finding greenstone but many became diggers and prospered well on the goldfields.

Modern, privately owned mines still operate at most of these goldfield areas with some on a very large scale. There is 'still gold in them thar hills'.

Roberta Lynne



## ITALIANS ON THE VICTORIAN GOLDFIELDS

Most of us think of Italian migration to Australia in terms of those who arrived as refugees, after World War 11. We rarely think about those Italians who may have arrived much earlier, a great deal earlier, in fact. And despite many mines and mining areas having Italian names, little has been written about their contribution to Australian gold

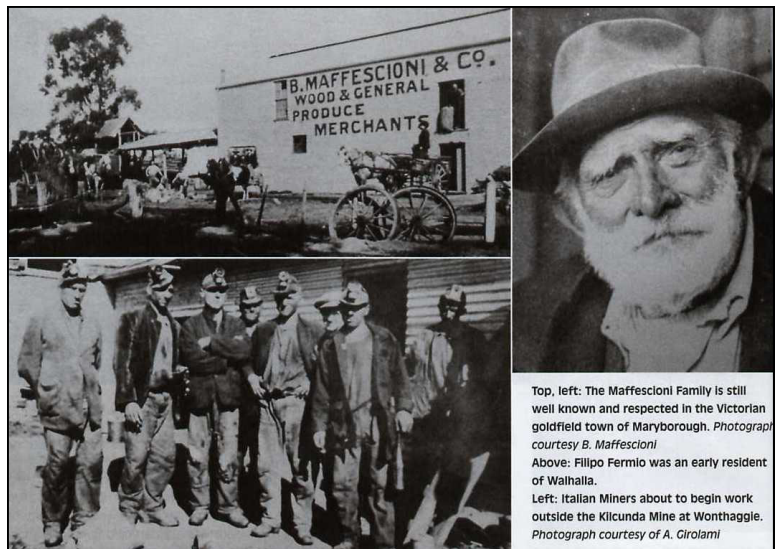
mining.

Perhaps the first voluntary European migrant to Australia was an Italian named Mario Sega from Genoa, who was on board the Dutch ship, "Eendracht" ad captained by Dirk Hartog. According to the Captain's log, Mario met a young Aboriginal women while walking along the lonely beach of Shark Bay, and is supposed to have fallen madly in love with the girl and never returned home.

When Captain James Cook first sailed the "Endeavour" into Australian waters he carried on board two Italians, James Mario Matro and Antonio Ponto. Even the "First Fleet" carried Italian soldiers while many of the early shiploads of convicts from England included Italians. From this it seems, Italians have had a link with Australia going much further back than most of us imagined.

With the finding of gold in the Australian colonies, Italians were no slower than any other people to sail half way around the world to join in the race for riches.

While their numbers were nowhere near those of the Irish, English or Americans, the Italians made their presence felt with attributes many other prospectors and miners lacked. The average Italian was intelligent, energetic, hard working, frugal and not prone to consuming strong spirits. If there



Top, left: The Maffescioni Family is still well known and respected in the Victorian goldfield town of Maryborough. Photograph courtesy B. Maffescioni  
Above: Filippo Fermio was an early resident of Walthalla.  
Left: Italian Miners about to begin work outside the Klicunda Mine at Wonthaggi. Photograph courtesy of A. Cirolami

was any drinking to be done it was usually wine they favoured. Italians soon found themselves owning mines and were often elected as leaders in local mining communities.

One of the reasons Italians quickly rose to levels of responsibility in the community was that many were very well educated young men who had fled political persecution, some having been involved in the 1848 uprising in Rome. Raffaello Carboni, was one such man. A competent linguist, fluent in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Carboni became deeply embroiled in the Eureka Stockade uprising in Ballarat in 1854 when his linguistic ability was sorely needed to keep the non-English speakers of the movement informed. Carboni was by no means the only Italian involved in the Eureka Stockade uprising. Joseph Barberis was closely associated with Peter Lalor and helped hide and feed him after the uprising was put down.

Victoria had the largest Italian population of all the colonies. Ballarat had many Italian families and miners and one such enclave was at Italian Gully in the Smythsdale/Scarsdale area. This gully was first opened around 1855 and was worked until 1862 by miners who were predominantly Italian. Even as late as the early 1900s, Italians were still living near the gully working the land with a little mining on the side.

Bendigo also attracted its share of Italian diggers. Elysian Flat lists 37 names of Italian origin on its electoral roll of the 1860s, but it is the names of so many of the gold workings and mines throughout New South Wales and Victoria that indicate how successful Italians were at mining. In the Eaglehawk area near Bendigo you have the Garibaldi, New Trento, Italian Lead, Montebello Reef and Italian Company to name a few mentioned in records of that time. Daylesford was another mining area where Italians did well. They opened up the Jim Crow diggings before it was called Daylesford and Italian Hill was another of their discoveries. Some of the more successful Italian diggers were Giuseppe Gulielmoni and five compatriots who discovered a buried reef and followed it only to come up against a basalt plug. Digging around it, they discovered the lead on the other side and did extremely well out of their venture.

Another, Maurizio Morganti, led a party that unearthed the first gold east of Daylesford in 1856. They also discovered gold in old alluvial leads emerging from basalt overlays and these discoveries led to large-scale mining ventures that employed hundreds of men.

Albino Pietro Paganetti, was a great tunneller and sluicer. He tunneled under what is still called Italian Hill in Daylesford, followed the alluvials for up to 1.5km and did extremely well from his workings.

#### WHERE THEY CAME FROM

While most Italian emigrants came direct from Italy, there were many Italian speakers who came from Ticino in Switzerland and political refugees from England, France and Germany. Perhaps the best educated were the young political refugees, who saw Australia not only as a place to get rich in finding gold, but a new land where the pages of history were yet to be written; a place where they could fight for justice in a new nation, where there was still hope for the individual and where the land was not owned by a few.

In the early days of Italian migration to Australia, most Italians came from the northern districts around Piedmont, but later they came from almost every province and state where Italian was spoken.

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815, there were many Italian speaking states, remnants of the old Roman Empire, outside of what is now known as Italy. There was the Duchy of Savoy (France), the County of Nice (France), Ticino (Switzerland), Trentino (Italy), Dalmatia (Croatia), Malta (independent) and Corsica (France). But while these people lived outside the geographical boundaries of Italy, they mostly thought of themselves as Italian, even though Italy itself did not formally exist until 1860.



It must have been extremely difficult to separate the number of Italian immigrants to Melbourne from the huge mixture of other nationalities. Between 1851 and 1861, it is estimated 584,000 people arrived in Melbourne by ship. Thousands more came overland from nearby colonies, and to make life more difficult for researchers, no records were kept of these inter-colony migrations. It is estimated that approximately 6000 Italian speakers had arrived in the colony of Victoria by 1860, a minor group when compared to the main influx of other nationalities.

#### AFTER THE SHALLOW GOLD RAN OUT

By the 1860s, most of the easily mined alluvial gold was gone and big companies were displacing the small mining concerns and individuals. Bendigo was building a city on the returns from the rich quartz reefs that had enriched the nearby gullies and streams, and those who had missed out on the easy gold, now went to work in underground mines. But not all Italian gold miners went under-

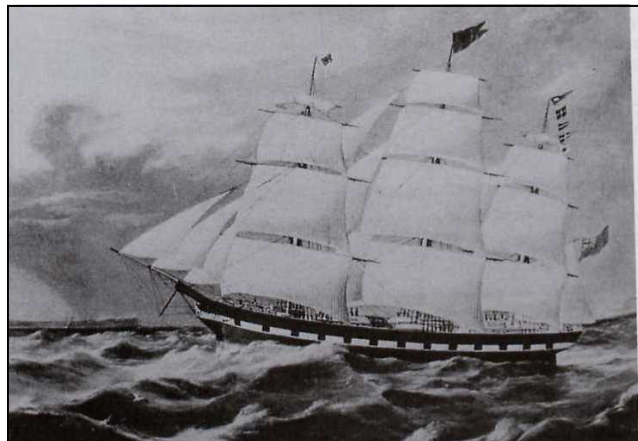


ground. The great majority were employed to cut timber to feed the voracious boilers that powered the mines, and to cut straight and strong timber to shore up the walls and roofs of the mines. Walhalla was one place where Italian timber cutters dominated the mining scene. They lived in their own community at Poverty Point, on the steep slopes overlooking the Thompson River, about 8km from Walhalla.

Right: The *Marco Polo* was one of the faster ships Italian pioneers journeyed aboard to the new land of hope and plenty, Australia.  
 Below, right: The Vanzetta brothers owned and operated this water battery at Spring Creek at Hepburn. Osvald Vanzetta, holding the pan. The other diggers are Luigi Rolleri, Jim Scheggia and Fred Vanina. Photograph courtesy of J. Andreallo



Many Italian immigrants came to Australia from the land, from the small impoverished villages that clung to the poor stony soil that was all too common in many parts of Italy. These immigrants were thrifty, innovative and hard working. They could coax crops from ground that thwarted attempts by others, but above all, they loved the blue skies and warm sun of Australia. Using the Mediterranean climate to best advantage, they grew bumper crops of grapes and made some of the best wine the colonies had ever known. They also entered into politics, became doctors, lawyers, hoteliers and fishermen, and in time, became a part of every facet of Australian life.



The one area Italians truly dominated was stone working. After the great alluvial rushes ended, many Italians found lucrative work designing and building the wonderful government buildings in Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne. Their influence can be seen today in the many fine buildings still standing throughout Victoria.

Alessandro Martelli graduated from Turin University in Architecture and Civil and Canon Law before leaving Melbourne in 1858. By 1865, he had his own prestigious architectural business in Collins Street. He designed four shops and dwellings in Fitzroy in 1868 and St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Lillydale in 1870, but his most well known work was probably the homestead "Harewood" at Tooradin in South Gippsland. The homestead is of unusual design with stained glass skylights and an

entrance hall paved with Italian marble.

But architecture wasn't Martelli's only passion. He was probably the first Italian engineer in Victoria to be associated with irrigation. Other Italian architects and builders of note were Louis Boldini, A.F.D. Cavallero, P. Leonardi, Benozzo Gozzoli, painter and decorator, and William Pamperti, stone carver.

Jaco Marocco fought as a Piedmontese volunteer in Garibaldi's army against the French before traveling to London, then Australia to work as a builder around Ararat. The Pola brothers Pietro and Giovanni also settled in Ararat along with builder Giorgio Grano, Jaco Marocco and Antonio Davico. These men were builders, stonemasons, stonecutters, house designers and draughtsmen and many may well have had a hand in the construction of the magnificent Ararat Town Hall which shows strong Italian influences in its design.

## DISCRIMINATION

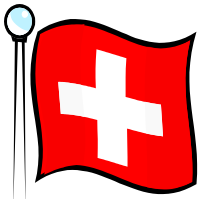
Like all races different in mien and colour to the white Anglo Saxon, Italians came in for their fair share of discrimination, especially during the turbulent years of the great gold rushes. But unlike the Chinese, who most resisted integration, many Italians went so far as to Anglicize their names to help them become more accepted. William Lamperti became William Lampert and the well known name of Ansett was originally Ansetti.

As Victoria settled into a more peaceful and industrious period, Italians became more and more part of their adopted country, and while some were still associated with mining, by 1900, most had moved into more reliable forms of industry.

When gold was discovered in Queensland, many Italians migrated north to Gympie, Ravenswood, Charters Towers, The Etheridge and the Palmer River rushes. Some stayed on afterwards to become the dominant nationality among sugar cane farmers. It wasn't until the 1890s when gold was discovered in Western Australia that Italians became embroiled in another gold rush. Many emulated their fathers and grand fathers and headed with all haste to the fabulous goldfields of the west.

Taken from Australian Gold Gem & Treasure.

Article supplied by Anne Doran.



## 9th Swiss Goldpanning Chamionship, Oct. 5th to 7th, 2007 in Bowil (Emmental)

The log house called „Schaechli“ in Bowil ist made of huge, rogh logs. It changed in a real Goldrush-Saloon during the weekend of October 5th to 7th, 2007 to be the center of the 9th Swiss Goldpanning Championship. The scenery is important and and puts the goldpanners in the right mood. It must be this typical goldrush atmosphere that motivates our friends abroad – not only from the neighbourhood-countries but also from destinations as far as Poland, the Netherlands or Slowakia (1480 km!) - to come to Switzerland for just one weekend.



**The arena**

So the people from abroad challenged the Swiss quite a bit. This does not only concern the number of competitors (about 50%) but also the winners. But this international mix deserved the praise of the Slovaks. For them our competition was the most international event apart from the European Championships and therefore the most worth travel destination to go in the goldpanning year of 2007.

The atmosphere was perfect when the regional people from the Emmental-valley mixed

with hats, karo-shirts or other western fashion styles. The Sunday afternoon was a folk festival before and after the final heats. Food and drinks matched absolutely with the scenery.

We were positively surprised to have 156 participating goldpanners. The Men-Pro category had to start with 5 heats of the quarter final (one heat of 20 each). The newly introduced Klondike-category was a full success. More than 90% of the participants registered for it. Here it was only allowed to pan with an „american type“ of gold pan (shaped like a frying pan). Each gold-



**Jackpot panning in front of the Goldrush Saloon on Friday evening**



**Combination winner Arturo Ramella (I, left) with price-sponsor Bijouterie Sonderegger**

panner was allowed to use his or her own Klondike-pan. We wanted to strenghten the position of the „creek-goldpanners“ again. This classic goldpan has been more and more driven out of the competitions during the last 15 years by the bateas and then the flat „speed-pans“. But no serious goldpanner uses a speed-pan while searching for gold out in the creeks.

The difference speed/Klondike was shown clearly in the times taken by the competitors. Arturo Ramella demonstrated that ef-

fect. The president of the „ABC d'ORO“ and WGA board member won both Men categories. It took him using the speed-pan 1 minute 28 but using the Klondike-pan 5 minuten for the same amount of sand (Statement issued by our computer specialist to the 1:28: „For me it only takes that time to put the gold into the vial!“).



So Arturo Ramella could be chosen the „combination-winner“ (the best out of the 4 categories Men/Ladies Pro/ Klondike). He was given a wonderful, handmade pin featuring a Swiss cross with embedded nugget, donated and manufactured by our main sponsor Bijouterie Sonderegger. Besides „surprising Arturo“ proven people won the heats. The Ladies-Pro final was won by World Champion 2006 Ester Van Diggelen from the Netherlands. Also our Swiss Champions defended their titles with success. Brigitte Megert was awarded Ladies Swiss Champion. She sets a high benchmark with her 4 victories (2007, 05, 97 and 93) for double Men Swiss Champion Werner Marti (2007 and 05).

Our Swiss Championships are not possible without our sponsors. We thank our main sponsors Bijouterie Sonderegger, Printer Tanner, Stämpfli, Valiant Bank and Wyhus



**Category Men Pro (from left to right most upper line): Valerio Pizzoglio I, Arturo Ramella I, Luca Boggia I and the rest of the Italians!**



**Category Ladies Pro (from left to right): Cecile Thibaud F, Esther Van Diggelen NL, Rosa Angela I**

Aemme and all other sponsors for their support. Please consider these firms when shopping.

A question remains at the end: Who is more important in such an event: The participants or the organizers? It is a fact that without organizers no participant can go there. These people – all headed by Fritz Grundbacher and Marlise and Willi Luedi – but all loyal helpers in building up and down the arena, running the competition or the saloon or the other details are thanked sincerely. Ranking lists of the Swiss Goldpanning Championships 2007

All finals and a lot of images are published on our website: [http://www.goldwaschen.ch/egold\\_sm.htm](http://www.goldwaschen.ch/egold_sm.htm). International ranking:

The numbers

The number of participants grew up to 156 compared to 2005 (123 participants) (this is due to the people from abroad;

<b>The competition:</b>	<b>The work:</b>	<b>The highlights:</b>
30 heats, of it 7 finals 156 participants from 8 nations 6,5 m3 gravel 23 gr gold 42,5 FTE (full time equivalents) to run the competition	43 FTE (full time equivalents) to build up and down the competition infrastructure (arena) 20 FTE to run and build up/down the saloon	good weather great arena new category Klondike children/youth free of charge Saloon with food and drings, enough covered seating outdoor no accidents

**Swiss ranking:**

<b>Category Men</b>	<b>Category Ladies</b>
1. Werner Marti, CH	1. Brigitte Megert, CH
2. Andreas Däppen, CH	2. Marianne Barba, CH
3. Rolf Messerli, CH	3. Marlise Lüdi, CH

Victor Jans



## The Lutine

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 1793 the Lutine was one of the 16 ships given by French royalists to the British vice-admiral Lord Hood. Her name was changed into H.M.S. Lutine. During the war between the Netherlands and England, the ship blocked the way to Amsterdam for years.



De Lutine vlak voor de stranding. Schilderij, anoniem.

In the year 1799, the Lutine sunk in a storm between Vlieland and Terschelling, with onboard a large amount of gold and silver, which was meant as wages for the English invasional forces in the Netherlands and as a financial support for the kingdom of Hannover, one of Englands allies. There were rumours that, besides the gold and silver, the Dutch lands jewelery of Viceroy William V, were also on board. The amount of gold and silver that sunk to the bottom of the sea that day is unknown.

The papers contradicted each other and mention amounts of 130.000 to 1.000.000 British pound sterling. Later sources, as insurance company Lloyds estimate the total value in 1957 at 1.400.000 pund sterling. The Dutch government, in 1821, makes the highest estimation, by valuing the cargo at 20 million guilders, but nothing is said about the missing lands jewelery.

### History of the search

In oktober 1799, the islands of Vlieland and Terschelling are occupied by the English. Because of the stories of

some survivors, the English occupiers now immediately after the sinking of the Lutine that the ship carried precious cargo. They send out a navy ship to the place of the sunken ship in order to prevent the inhabitants of Vlieland and Terschelling luting the wreck.

After the departure of the English, salvage crews from Terschelling start to explore the ship in 1800. When the weather is clear one could see the Lutine's canon balls on the bottom of the sea. Soon the first barrels filled with gold and silver were hoisted from the seafloor with grippers and cranes. Up to 1801 the crews salvage for about a value of 300.000 guilders. Working with grippers is made almost impossible, due to the corrosion of the iron hoops around the barrels. The barrels disintegrate with gripping. Due to the strong current the ship has fallen apart and the treasure and the wreck disappear under the shifting sands.

### The Divers

In 1821 the mayor of Terschelling, Eschauzier, got interested in the treasure. He employs a cast iron diving bell, but it does not turn up any gold. In 1834 the first real divers turn up at the Lutine wreck site. In 1828 the Dean brothers invent the "Dean diving helmet". A diver using such a device is able to stay submerged for hours.

One of the brothers makes 12 dives with his diving helmet on the wreck, but he did not found a grain of gold. Dutch helmet-divers established a salvage company especially for the Lutine, "De Onderneming", are more successful in the period 1857 to 1860. When the found clumps of rust on the bottom of the sea, they are at first very disappointed, but on later assessment the clumps of rust contain gold. When the word got out, everybody wanted a piece of the treasure, but the dutch government had given de Onderneming the monopoly of salvaging the Lutine, so the send out a gunboat to keep out looters.

In 1860, the helm divers stop finding reasonable amounts of gold, and de Onderneming has salvaged worth half a million guilders (41 gold bars, 64 silver bars and 15.350 golden and silver coins). Furthermore, the divers salvaged the ships bell. The bell is still hanging at the London based insurance company Lloyds and is rung every time a major shipping disaster has occurred.

### Ongoing goldrush with little result

As the wreck stays longer under the sand of the North



Sea and is exposed to the tides and currents, the success rate of gold diggers recedes. In 1867, de Onderneming finances a sand diving expedition, where helmet divers take a metal tube down where through water is expelled to liquefy the sand and expose the underlying treasure, but the results were none. The treasure keeps on hiding. The progress of the industrial revolution can not bring up the treasure either. Scooping devices and sand pumps do not turn up a grain of gold.

In 1910, captain Gardiner, who salvaged the load of a VOC ship near South Africa 3 years earlier, arrives at the scene. With a professional diving and salvaging ship he prospected the site, but did not turn up anything. In 1928, the inhabitants of the islands Texel and Terschelling, united in the Doeksen Company and the Texelse Stoomboot Maatschappij, also look for the treasure with

go.

## Epilogue

Modern treasure hunters and archeologist are still searching for gold and silver buried beneath the sands of the North Sea. In 1980, the New Zealand diver Kelly Tarlton, with his Palisade Exploration Company, searched the IJzergat. With prop washers he could make a hole 8 meters deep and 25 meters in diameter, but he had no success. Nowadays, the Caranan diving team under the direction of Ane Jan Duijf researches the wreck. His motives are more the mapping of the remains of the Lutine and to make an archaeological assessment of the site. He collaborates with the Dutch Institute of Marine and Underwater Archaeology (NISA) .



dredges and helmet divers.

The stop working in 1931, to collaborate with a rich industrial from Limburg, Beckers, also called the "golden man". Beckers is caught by the gold fever, and constructs an iron diving tower in the shape of a light bulb with a bottom of 12 meters. Through the diving tower one should be able reach the wreck. The first tower breaks down, but Beckers constructs a second tower weighing 35 tons. After dredges exposed the wrecked remains of the Lutine, Beckers' tower is placed on top of the wreck and the search goes on until 1935. The result: 1 person died because due a mistake the air supply was cut off. Even well known enterprises as the mining company Biliton take part in the race for the gold in 1938. The company working mainly in the Dutch Indies brings in the largest tin dredge in the world, the Karimata. 160 buckets each capable of scooping 40 liters of dirt, plough through the site. In the early morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, the last gold bar until now was found, but that was all the Lutine let

The location of the sinking of the Lutine is protected by the state as an archaeological monument. Research by the Caranan diving team and the NISA are allowed, but all other bottom disturbing activities are forbidden. Treasure hunters keep out !

But the gold rush continues. The Caranan diving team located the probable stern of the Lutine 2 kilometers to the southeast of the sinking site. Does the rest of the treasure hides there?

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[lutine.htm](http://home.planet.nl/~schab040/lutine.htm)



## PANNING FOR GOLD IN LYELL CREEK (NEW ZEALAND)

bedrock in active stream. The gold bearing bed was revealed in very shallow depth, just below some 30-40 cm of light gravel wash. Panning with the gold pan gave us encouraging 0,5 grams of gold in just 3 hours, so we have decided to set up some more „sophisticated” gold panning system.

We got a wooden board (courtesy of Murchison grocery), a few dozen of nails and a rubber mat from the car and made up very efficient sluice box in the camp. The effort was honoured as soon as the first day. After 3 hours of work, we have recovered 7.7 (0.25 oz) gold nugget, which was later named “Jozo” and celebrated with the last leftovers of the famous Slovak alcohol “Borovicka”. We had got a gold rush and we didn’t mind clouds of biting

sandflies or cold water in the creek. Every day we had to sluice hundred 10 litre buckets (1m3) of dirt and moved dozens of heavy granite boulders. Some of them

The old township of Lyell is located 35 km W of Murchison on the west Coast of South Island of New Zealand. It has grown on the confluence of Lyell Creek and Buller river during the gold rush following the discovery of rich alluvial ground in Lyell and Irishman Creek in 1862. At least 10,000 ounces (300 kg) of gold were mined during the first gold rush with the biggest nugget weighing 90 ounces (2,8 kg). The gold was panned mostly out of terraces, since the stream is quite powerful and is rising very quickly after thunderstorms. The climate here is very humid, with some heavy rainfalls. Therefore west coast is sometime also called “Wet Coast”. Gold bearing quartz lodes have been worked at Lyell over a strike length of



5km. The most profitable and greatest producer of the mines in the Lyell Goldfield was Alpine United which operated between 1874 and 1912 producing 80,000 ounces (2,5 tons) at an average grade of 16.8 g/t gold. Now it is one of the areas which has been set for recreational gold panning and is maintained by Department of Conservation. We made a stop in Lyell, while we were travelling around New Zealand, just to visit a place with old gold mining spirit and to try our luck in the famous creek. On the first day of prospecting, we have discovered unworked part of





were as heavy as 60-70kg and it was almost impossible to get them out of our claim. On the fifth day of panning at the river was the most critical. On the place where we had been panning only very mild rain had developed, but somewhere in the mountains it must have been a serious



thunderstorm. The creek started flooding at the end of the day and rose by 50cm in just a few seconds. The bucket, pick, shovel and especially sluice box with the gold from 40 buckets of rich dirt were washed away. We couldn't get to the walkway on the other side of the canyon because of flood which had cut off our way to the camp, so we climbed through steep canyons and wet rainforest to get back to the camp. But even this experience didn't discourage us from further panning. On the other day, we managed to find all the lost equipment down the creek. We have also found on our escape from flooding creek an old plastic hose, which suggested that sluicing of nearby alluvial terrace did not happen long time ago and brought it to the claim. It improved our water management system in very significantly. After 8 days of hard work we worked out cca 25 grams of gold and earned long lasting memories.

Peter Zitnan & Peter Tucek

Gold prospectors from Slovakia,  
Email: pzitnan@gmail.com

### Gold Songs CD!

One of the most enjoyable parts of a world championship is meeting panners, our friends, from across the world - we laugh together, eat, compete, drink and sing. But very rarely is a song finished as nobody seems to know all the words! With this in mind a proposal was made at the annual meeting in Dawson for a CD to be made of our favourite gold songs. We can listen to these at home, learn the words, and have the best campfire singing ever! Gerry Tobin from Australia offered to head up the project and Cesar from Spain stepped forward to help him. These two very competent musician-panners now need you to suggest what songs - or even poems - could go on the Gold Songs CD. Of course the CD needs a name too! So, let them have your ideas, your favourite songs and the quality of our camp fires will get even better, or just go on all night!

Vincent Thurkettle

**Golden Times** and the WGA web site now have a new team to ensure the quality and quantity of information to the WGA goldpanners.

The Communications committee are:

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Esther van Diggelen—WGA Webmaster

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Please contact them individually (see back page) or email us at [wga\\_comms@yahoo.com](mailto:wga_comms@yahoo.com)

## BGA say farewell to Mick Gossage



The first ever British Goldpanning Championship was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1989 in Wales and it was there Mick Gossage was first introduced to the strange band of people know as British goldpanners. Little did he know what he was getting into and I wonder did he really think he would still be involved 18 years later. Over the years Mick



has worked hard on behalf of the BGA, he was president for 13 years and a key member of the organising committee of the 1992 World Championship held at Wanlockhead and Leadhills, for many years was head of rules for the World Goldpanning Association. From that first day in May '89 to this day he has been the main organiser of the annual British Goldpanning Championships which over the

last 10 years have continued to be held at Wanlockhead. Since 1989 he has competed in every British, Scottish and Welsh Championships, plus many international Championships and consequently over the years has collected many medals and quite a number of trophies. True to form Mick took the Scottish and British 2007 trophies

and as holder of the Welsh title this sets a record which surely will be hard to beat. As a prospector wherever he has been he has always managed to collect a few samples to add to his collection from around the world. After 18 years as competition organiser Mick has stepped



down, a short presentation was made on behalf of the BGA and fellow goldpanners. A painting of Wanlockhead by a local artist was presented to a very surprised Mick on the Sunday after the medal awards when he was thanked by everyone for all the work he has put in over the years. Mick and his wife Lin are

leaving Yorkshire and moving to warmer climates in Southern Spain. I'm sure that he will not give up his love of goldprospecting altogether and I suspect he has already been looking at maps of gold bearing areas of Spain. We wish them luck with their new life in Spain and hope they won't disappear altogether and will return from time to time to say hello. Good luck and good health to both.

Barbara Copley

### Your article here!

Do you have a story or information "the World needs to know!"

Please send us your summer adventures or events for the end of year publication





## Happy Retirement Inkeri

**Inkeri Syrjänen, director of Gold Prospector Museum, retired early May just after her 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.**



**I**nkeri remembers how she only in her early childhood eagerly read stories about Lapland. Later on she got to know all possible books describing the fascinating Lapland and its nature. Inkeri used to hike in Lapland among student groups in 60's. After studying Scandinavian Philology among the other subjects and after working as a secretary at the university of Jyväskylä in middle-Finland she made the fatal-to-be decision: I'll move to Lapland and work there for a year or two. You

can always get out of there anyway, she thought. She found a proper job in Sodankylä as a teacher, packed her things and moved up to north.

Inkeri admits that when arriving at Lapland her knowledge of gold was extremely modest. – I knew there is a place called Lemmenjoki and had heard that gold had been found there. Somewhere between the fells she got to know Kauko Launonen, who had already lost his heart to gold and gold tradition. – Kauko had participated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of Lappish gold by the Ivalojoki River and showed me a film from there. We heard about Tankavaara, went for a visit and got to know Nipa Raumala and Yrjö Korhonen. We caught the gold fever and stayed, Inkeri recalls.

### **Questions arise from gold – museum was the answer!**

During the early 70's Inkeri and Kauko spent all their possible spare time as voluntary workers with Raumala and Korhonen in Tankavaara. When Gold Prospector Museum was founded Inkeri became officially the attendant of the museum. – We were extremely proud of the Nut Cabin, our first museum built up by voluntary workers. We had a own building on rental property, we had a real museum! Collections of items were in a garage tent and photos in a shoe box. I applied for monetary aid from National Board of Antiquities. Such a disappointment when the application was bailed out, Inkeri smiles when recalling the early years of hard work.

The very next year after working six years as a Swedish teacher in Sodankylä Inkeri decided to resign and totally devoted herself to gold tradition. – I caught my severe infection of gold fever when found my biggest nugget weighing princely one gram! For me it was a one-night-fever and when I got better that shiny metal named gold

wasn't that fascinating any more. Interesting questions from the history arise instead: Who, where and why?

These questions and finding answers to them have carried on for 35 years now. Lots of valuable items from the riverbanks have been saved, many memories and stories have been recorded. A lot has happened but some memories stay clearer than the others. Inkeri remembers the first World Goldpanning Championships held in 1977 exceptionally well. – President of Finland, Urho Kekkonen, was our special guest and it was my honour to give him a welcoming speech in several languages. It was such an exciting event, I was sure I can't get words out of my mouth. One of our museum guides had tried to teach me the proper pronunciation but it was more like stammering...President Kekkonen was sitting on a wolf skin on his wooden armchair, designed and made specially for that occasion by Yrjö Korhonen. I bravely went on with my Swedish and German when saw the president yawning there...At that very same moment all the excitement was gone. We all are humans, I realised. Including presidents!

### **Gold, good books and gardening**

It can truly be said that Inkeri Syrjänen has always been a pioneer and pathfinder. When standing at the door of the museum, her work of life, she doesn't only look back but also confidentially to the future. – I really hope that museums here in Finland and internationally as well would get more respect and valuation. They need more resources to be able to do the valuable work as recorders of the common heritage. Cooperation, networks and international contacts are more and more important. Golden World in Tankavaara is a living proof of that, Inkeri reminds us.

Inkeri has followed her interest in gold around the world. – The most memorable moments are those from World Championships even if I can't brag about my own success. In the very first Worlds here in Tankavaara I came second, my time was 15 minutes and something... In Japan I managed to become the last one and it didn't get much better in Czech either. My only moment of success was in team category years ago in Canada. I was lucky to pan in such a good team that it won despite of me, Inkeri laughs.

We will surely meet Inkeri in world's gold fields still in future. There are still some interesting gold areas waiting for a visit, like Papua New Guinea. But the nearest future plans include gardening in Tankavaara and relaxed moments with the masterpieces of world's literature.

Inkeri sends her best regards for all of you reading Golden Times. – Thank you friends, thank you for everything. Thank you especially for helping us to create Golden World exhibition – we couldn't have managed to do that without your help. Thank you for all those memorable moments and unforgettable meetings around the world. Hope to see you soon again!

*Ulla Kettunen*



## GOLD FIRST DISCOVERED IN ITALY

This important metal has been known in old Italy since prehistoric times.

The ancient civilizations of the Etruscans and Romans were in contact with civilizations along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and included the Middle East, Greece, Egypt and Phoenicians.

Their contact was through com-



mercial and colonial activities and through wars.

Large quantities of exquisite golden jewellery, pertaining to these ancient civilizations, have come to



light through archeological diggings and excavations, throughout Italy.

All over Italy, one can see many of these golden master pieces on display. The Romans worked very hard in the goldmines, especially in the North West areas of Italy.

The Gold of LA BASSA – This mine was worked from 150 to 50 BC. Much of the gold was obtained through maritime trade and especially through wars.

A Roman coin named "AUREO" – Faustina Minor – Wife of Emperor Marco Aurelius  
176 AC. Weight 7.30 grams.



A Roman coin named "AURUS" of pure gold was introduced by Julius Caesar 49 BC.



2 Photos above are from the Roman site excavations named San Damiano, near the Elvo river where panners go for gold. (This is not the site where the above coins were found)

Dino Buccoliero – Milan - Italy

## News from Biella Goldpanners' Association, Italy

I have often heard it said as regards weather, that March 'comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb'. However, you may rest assured that there were no lions, real or proverbial, in OUR arena when, on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Association's Gold Season opened with our annual Spring Festival. It was an unseasonably glorious day, all of 25° and reminiscent of summer (and serving as a reminder that indeed, all is not well with the health of our poor planet...).

It was also, however, ideal for staging our 'friendly' competition, the result of which was based on an accumulated total over several heats.

This day was significant for our Association from several points of view, not least of which was the inauguration of our brand new toilet facilities close to the arena, as part of the 'road-map' towards Biella 2009 which is seldom far from our minds. Shower facilities have also been included and are due to be fully functional very soon. We are working very hard to



welcome THE WORLD in a fitting way next year!

Once the competition had finished and the results were being processed, all 130 people present sat down together at long tables, which had been set in the

sun, to partake of the traditional Fagiolata or bean and sausage stew which is typical of our area and, (by coincidence?) also beloved fare of the traditional and very hungry gold prospectors of old. Preparing and cooking the local version of this delicacy requires more than one day- beans have to be steeped, onions peeled L etc and the task has always fallen to Venerino, our veteran chef. This year, being unable to do the job himself, he temporarily passed the honour- and the work- to his sons Valter and Valerio who did him proud. Discussion ensued around the table about whether we might schedule a Fagiolata for our World visitors next year... your feedback on this would be appreciated- though should you adhere, beware that your cholesterol levels might just rise a fraction!

In the afternoon, due probably to the clemency of the weather, we established a new record- three new members joined our Association- all of them under four months old and all girls, similarly clad in delicious pink outfits, all daughters of existing members and on their very first visit to the Arena. It was a shame that because their feeding times did not coincide, we were unable to have a photo of them together, all displaying their membership cards!

The event came to a close with the prize-giving ceremony – the trophy went to somebody very familiar to you all- our President, your Vice-President and if you still haven't guessed the identity... well, too bad!

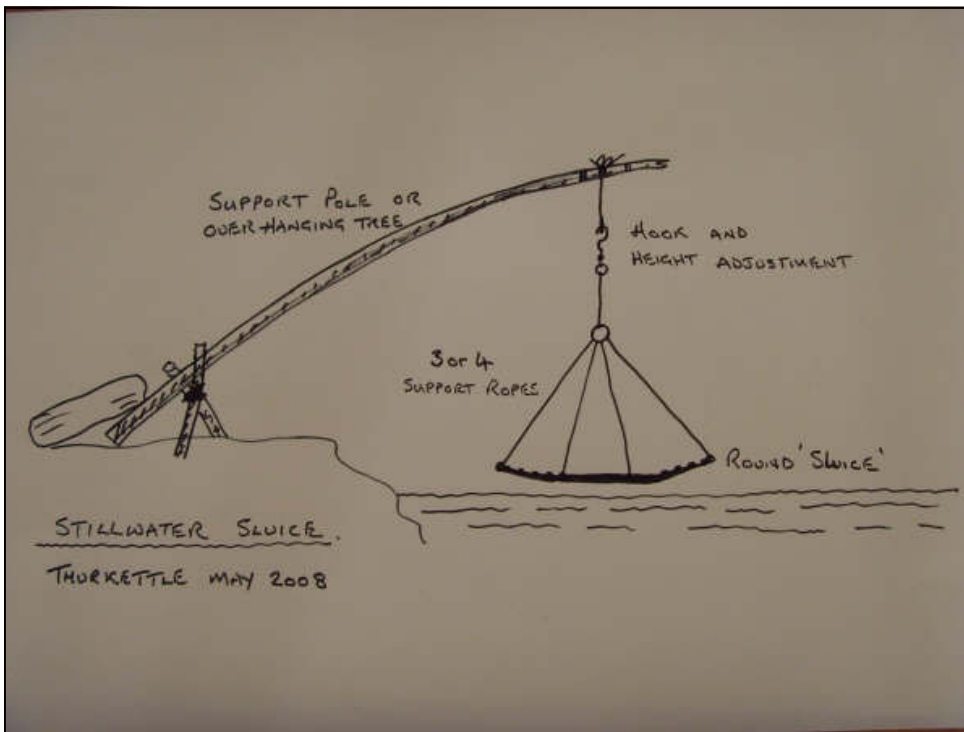


## The Stillwater Sluice

I was listening to a couple of panners talking about the 'Ferrari' pans while watching a competition heat a while back. They were saying what a great competition pan the Ferrari is, but useless on the river. This set me thinking - how could the amazing speed of these pans be useful in river prospecting? And I think I may have the answer.

A problem I have often found while gold prospecting is how to work paydirt gravels on areas of river where it is calm and has no rapids or fall for a normal sluice to be set. In New Zealand I spent several days working a small sluice with friend, Peter Gower. We had to carry buckets of the fresh dug gravel about 60m to the sluice. We took it in turns, carrying 20 buckets then digging 20 buckets, I swear my arms are longer now! Historically on these calm rivers a prospector would have made a Rocker, and modern prospectors would maybe use a motor-driven high-banker. I am not aware of anything like what I am proposing having been used in the past, or in use anywhere today.

My idea is that a specially designed, Ferrari-style, round 'Stillwater Sluice' be mounted on a rope/chain support and hung from a tree or pole out into the river. It is then lowered into the river and a bucket of the gold bearing gravel poured into the centre. The suspended 'Stillwater' is then washed in circles to concentrate the gravel, this is repeated until clean up. The centre riffle will be the richest, like the first riffle on a linear sluice normally has the most gold. In fact the whole process is much like normal sluicing - only circular! This will utilise the fast action of Ferrari panning, but with a large, 'weightless' pan. This will give the serious small-scale prospector an exciting new piece of equipment for stretches of calm water.



The advantages I see for the 'Stillwater Sluice' are that it is cheap, easily made, easily used, can be operated by one person, has no moving parts to break, no engine to maintain or cause pollution, is light to carry and is quiet. I like the fact that it takes a world class proven competition technique back to the river to recover 'wild' gold!

I really believe this has the potential to become a basic tool used in the right circumstances by small-scale miners all over the world - and I've thought about patents and manufacturing. However, without wanting to get all formal what I think is this. I want to share my idea with all prospectors so that the engineers amongst you can think about this and work on designs. I want Stillwater Sluices to be freely made and tried and im-

proved by use on the gold rivers, but I do claim the intellectual rights to the idea and the machine. The suspended circular sluice may have a useful place in our world. If so, I would be honoured when, long after I'm dead and gone, prospectors set up 'Thurkettle Stillwaters' by calm rivers and quietly thank me for keeping their arms the right length!

Vincent Thurkettle

# WORLD GOLDPANNING CHAMPIONSHIP 2008

21 st to 27 th JULY 2008



## **Programme (Subject to change)**

### **Friday 18**

10am - 1.30 pm / 4 pm - 7 pm

Registration. Free Goldpanning in the river (by law).

### **Saturday 19**

10.30 am - 1.30 pm / 4 pm - 7 pm

Registration. Free goldpanning in the river (by law).

### **Sunday 20**

9 am - 7 pm

Touristy visit to Coaña's celtic hill - fort, Luarca and Cudillero, typical seaside villages.

10am - 1.30 pm / 4 pm - 7 pm

Registration. Free goldpanning in the river (by law).

### **Monday 21**

9,15 am - 8 pm

Touristy visit to Cultural Landscape of " Las Médulas" in León (World Heritage).

10am - 1.30 pm / 4 pm - 7 pm

Registration. Free goldpanning in the river (by law).

### **Tuesday 22**

9,15 am - 5,30 pm

Touristy visit to Tineo's region.

10 am - 1,30 pm / 4 pm - 7 pm

Official Registration ends. Free goldpanning in the river (by law).

7,30 pm

Parade and Opening Ceremony. Dinner and spanish party.

### **Wednesday 23**

Elimination Heats.

6,30 pm

Annual Meeting of WGA.

Other activities along the day.

### **Thursday 24**

Elimination Heats.

9 pm

Presentation of 2009 WGC by Italian Host Committee.

10 pm

Italian - Spanish party.

Other activities along the day.

### **Friday 25**

Elimination Heats.

10 pm

Spanish party.

Other activities along the day.

### **Saturday 26**

Elimination heats.

9 pm

Official dinner by the Host Committee.

10 pm

Spanish party.

Other activities along the day.

### **Sunday 27**

Championship Finals.

6, 30 pm

Awards Giving and Closing Ceremony. Spanish party.

Other activities along the day.





## 2008 WORLD GOLDPANNING CHAMPIONSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

NAME:

ADDRESS:

COUNTRY:  PHONE:

EMAIL:  T-SHIRT SIZE:

ACOMODATION IN CAMPING: SÍ: <input type="checkbox"/>		NO: <input type="checkbox"/>	
CARAVAN: <input type="checkbox"/>	TENT (2/4 P.): <input type="checkbox"/>	BIG TENT (4 P. or more): <input type="checkbox"/>	

### EVENTS REGISTERED FOR:

**Official categories:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	JUNIORS (15 yrs & under)	10 €	AGE	<input style="width: 70px;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	ADULTS - MEN		25 €	
<input type="checkbox"/>	ADULTS - LADYES		25 €	
<input type="checkbox"/>	VETERANS (60 & over)	25 €	AGE	<input style="width: 70px;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	NATIONAL TEAM	75 €	COUNTRY:	<input style="width: 130px;" type="text"/>

**Unofficial categories:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	CHILDREN (11 yrs & under)	FREE	AGE	<input style="width: 70px;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	COUPLE	20 €	NAME:	<input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 MEMBER TEAM	30 €	NAME:	<input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 MEMBER TEAM	50 €	NAME:	<input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	TRADITIONAL PAN	25 €		

The Registration payment will be made only at the Championship Office,  
between 18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of July.

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_ €

Paid:    Credit Card     Cash

Asociación de Bateadores de Oro "BARCIAECUS"  
G- 33523044  
MUSEO DEL ORO DE ASTURIAS  
Barrio San Nicolás, s/n  
33873 – NAVELGAS (Tineo) – ASTURIAS (Spain)





# Golden Times

## The magazine of the World Goldpanning Association (WGA)

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