

# Golden Times

1-2/01

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*Lode gold pieces from the Surselva area (Swiss Alps)*

## ***Message from the President..***

The Gold pan is a part of every gold miners equipment. It's probably one of the oldest tools in the World. The collections at the Gold Museum of Tankavaara include almost 200 different goldpans, but the basic model has remained the same for thousands of years. Often the only visible difference is the raw material, almost any bowl can be used as a gold pan.



During the last thirty years the gold pan has gone through big changes. Due to gold panning competitions new models have been developed in order to find gold as quickly as possible. There is no need for this in the normal gold prospectors or recreational panners work.

When the first rules for a gold panning competition were drawn up in 1974 all competitors used a similar, traditional Finnish sheet iron gold pan. The word "traditional" was also included in the first international rules. Later the traditional has been abandoned and only some measures for the pan are regulated.

The development of goldpans used in competitions has already resulted in some equipment not resembling a traditional gold pan at all. This development has also often led to arguments among the competitors. Deciding which goldpans are approved according to the rules is not always an easy task for the judges either.

There are often proposals to return back to the times of the first competitions, when all competitors used a similar gold pan provided by the organizer. This solution would resolve any disputes. However, this would cause problems because traditional goldpans are different in various parts of the world and every model requires a different panning technique. Many panners have difficulties in learning new techniques. This might result in more variation in competition results, though.

There is a discussion about goldpans used in competitions. I hope the members of our association in different countries will work to make their views about the matter clear. I believe that during the next few years the WGA has to take a position in this matter and adjust the international rules concerning competition goldpans.

I have noticed to my pleasure, that our members in different countries have, in addition to competitions paid attention to preserving the heritage. Museums presenting the gold history have been established in many countries. The latest among them is a museum of gold history of the Roman Empire in Biella, Italy. Good luck for your work, and let our aim be a time when there is a museum or an exhibition about the history of alluvial gold panning in all our member countries. It would be the most perfect place, when the visitor could pan a few gold nuggets to take home as a souvenir!

I wish good luck to all gold event organizers and a happy summer for all goldpanners!

Kauko Launonen

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## ***Treasurers report..***

*Just a few points to keep you informed.*

I'll be preparing a summary of this year's (2000 - 01) income and expenditure soon, ready for presentation at this year's meeting of the WGA members council meeting in Maryborough, Australia. Based on the current figures I expect to report that we remain in the agreeable situation where expenses are slightly less than our income.



The money raised through voting fees and the fees to bid for the right to host the World Championships are almost entirely spent on the production and distribution of Golden Times. However this year we have registered our name as an Internet organisation, there is an annual cost of USD 25 to do this. The WGA wants to develop our Internet site over the next few years, but this will have to be done with members' voluntary help, as we certainly do not have the funds to pay for this work!

Council Members please note – you will be advised of the voting fee due from your country with the papers and invitation to the WGA meeting in Maryborough. Please bring USD if at all possible as this is a great help to me.

Best wishes and good panning to you all.

Vincent Thurkettle

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### **Editorial..**

Welcome to the summer, as seems to be the norm with Golden Times we publish a little later than planned! But we have a good excuse! With the Europeans just completed it seemed worth waiting for the reports and pictures to come in. I hope you agree with us. With the Worlds coming late in the year it will be good to have those reports and a year wrap up for the December issue. As we waited for the reports and pictures to come in GT seemed to keep growing! Now as we finally "*draw the curtain*" we are at our largest publication ever. 32 pages. We are sorry to those who did not quite make the deadline, but please keep articles coming in for the next issue!

As you have read from the Treasurer's report we have reserved a domain name for the WGA. <http://www.worldgoldpanningassociation.org> will be our new address. Hopefully by the time you read this we will have a site up and running. Having seen some of the other gold panning sites already out there from our member countries it is very encouraging both how good they are and how much they are used. We hope ours will be a site that can link the others together and provide a general web site for WGA news and copies of GT. If any of the "webmasters" out there can help with the WGA site please let us know. We would like to keep it as cheap as possible to avoid spending WGA funds, so the site may not be up to Microsoft's standards, but bear with us and help if you can too!

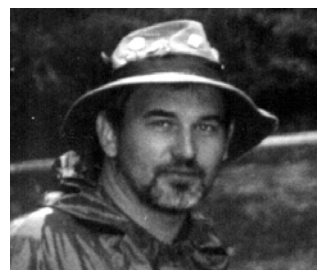
We have also included a list of all the national representatives from the 2000 WGA meeting in this issue, please let us know if any of the details are wrong. This will be updated at the next WGA meeting As always we are looking for articles to make GT even better, please spend some time and tell us about your gold panning, you don't have to give away any secret locations! Please stop us in Australia and let us know how GT is doing and how we can improve! See you there....



**Pirjo**



**Inkeri**



**Paul**

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**WGA Update:**  
**Rules for the National Team Event**

At the World Goldpanning Association council meeting in Poland last year (2000) the council voted for the following amendment to the rules regarding the National Team Event. Please find enclosed a copy of the rules that should be inserted into the rulebook under item 4. Rules For the Competition. Section G National Team Event Rules. You should remove all of the present section G. and replace with this one.

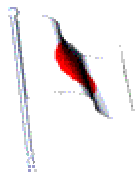
This amendment will be in force for a period of three years and then discussed again at the WGA meeting in Slovakia. Organisers from Australia, Japan and Switzerland are to use the following rules for the National Team Events during their competitions.

**G. THE NATIONAL TEAM EVENT RULES**

1. Each team will occupy 1 panning pool. Team members not panning may stay but must not interfere with any other National team. Verbal advice only may be given by the other members of the team.
2. Each team member has their own bucket of sand and gravel. They are the only ones responsible for panning the sand and gravel. They are not allowed to pass any, sand and gravel, buckets or gold between team members unless it is in the tube.
3. Each team member is responsible for bottling their own gold. If you are passing pans between each team member then the pan will be washed by the panner in the panning pool before it is passed on.
4. Under no circumstances is any member of the team other than the one panning allowed to touch the panning pool or equipment or sand and gravel of the person in the panning pool.
5. All team members have their own bucket of sand and gravel. They will pan this down and bottle their own gold. Competitors one to four do not have to place the cap on the bottle. Once a competitors bucket is empty it must be placed on the opposite side of the panning pool to the side that the teams are on. Prior to leaving the panning pool competitors must wash their pans. Competitors may not pass to another team member an unwashed pan.
6. The fifth team member (the competitor wearing the number) has their own bucket of sand and gravel that they will pan down and bottle their own gold. When this competitor has finished they must place the cap securely on the tube and give the finishing signal, which is to raise the pan above the head and shout. From this time they must not remove the cap from the tube. When the competitor gets out of the pool he must place the tube in his pan. Only the competitor wearing the number will line up for counting, the other team members must leave the area. The fifth competitor may count the gold in the tube but this must be done within the pan. Teams will face Instant disqualification for removing the cap from the tube once they have given the finish signal.
7. General.  
Sand and gravel already washed into the pool must not be taken back into the pan. Competitors will face Instant disqualification for this offence.  
Once finished teams must leave the pool immediately without disturbing the other panners. Should you disturb other panners you could face disqualification.
8. On leaving the panning pools the fifth panner must follow the verification clause in the rules at section H. Verification.
9. The total time for the team event is thirty (30) minutes.



## ***Usotan Goldpanning Festival..***



On Sunday, August 6, at Usotan Goldpanning Park, the 2000 Usotan Goldpanning Festival was held. It was an enjoyable event spread out under a strong midsummer sun. (Pictures 1 and 2)



There were 40 individuals that entered this year's Goldpanning Championships. In the Women's Beginners category there was an exchange student from China that also



participated. Mr. Tazaki, the Goldpanning Grand Champion (Overall winner), was presented with a specially made Yuri Ita Board (the Hanzawa Choujuuro Award). (Picture3) As an attraction, a treasure hunting game was held in the nearby Usotan River. Many children searched with a gold pan for the special treasures hidden in the sand. These hidden treasures were exchanged for prizes that the organizer had furnished. (Picture 4)

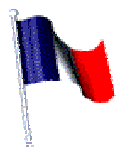


From the All Japan Goldpanning Association  
Makoto Okada,  
Secretariat



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## ***THE GOLDEN WATERS OF THE CHERAN..***



*From 28 April to 1 May the OR-ALP 4th international meeting of gold panners in Cusy, France was held, on the Chéran river. With the repeated floods of nowadays, are there still nuggets to find?*

Jacques Brest, President of the gold panning association RHON'OR and organizer of those golden days, is worried. Will it be possible to pan for gold with such agitated and muddy waters? As a matter of fact, to be able to wash the sand and see the gold flakes, you need still water. Of course, if you work with a sluice, the problem is lessened, but most of them are working with a pan or a batea. Well, whatever the conditions, the event will be held and French, Swiss and Italian panners will prospect the river for four days. It will also be an opportunity to meet with some champions.

Indeed, there are two aspects to gold panning. First, there's the gold search, panning and prospecting for new placers. But there's also the associative life and the competitions where

panners are showing their ability and their speed. All are given a bucket of sand containing a certain number of gold flakes, the same number for each competitor, and at the signal they will wash as fast as possible to recover the gold. Championships are held in many countries. The French championship will be held in September, the European one at the end of June in Italy and the World Championship in Australia. Jacques Brest will participate, together with Cécile Thibaud, secretary of the association and European Champion in 1996.



Dauphiné Libéré Haute-Savoie, 28/04/2001  
Original article by Adrien Cros  
Translation: RHON'OR  
This year will see the first participation of our Swiss neighbors. Starting from the base camp in Cusy, the participants will prospect up and down the Chéran, a river known to be auriferous from the bridge of Banges to its confluent with the Fier river. A legend says that gold can be found in a cave and that Swiss people exploited the cave around 1800. The reality

is most likely that they were using the cave as a shelter but the steps and a sluice-like canal dug in the rocks fuelled the imagination of the locals. A visit of the cave is scheduled for Sunday morning.

Other auriferous rivers can be found in the region: the Fier, the Arve, the Usse and many others still hide gold flakes and maybe some oh-so-hard to find small nuggets. Gold panners here would tell you: it's the pleasure of finding rather than the find that counts. And the good laughs between friends.

Information at the association headquarters: 6 rue V. Komarov, 69200 Vénissieux.

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### ***Simply Diego..***

By Arturo Ramella



A portrait of Diego Rossetti from Borriana, a goldpanner and a Friend.

On Oct. 22nd 2000 Diego Rossetti would have celebrated his 70th birthday. Unfortunately, a fatal illness deprived us of the joy of honouring him and of spending time in his company. The moments that awaited us at our "Victimula", the village of the Biella goldpanners which he, as well as us, had so wished for and dreamed of. In the search for gold, and also in life itself, Diego taught many things to many of us but specially to hundreds of school-children who spent hours with him on the banks of his Elvo, Biella's auriferous river familiar to him over many years.

Diego lived through an age when the goldpanner still went to the river in search of the yellow metal in order to sell it to buy food, during the years following the second world war; in this enterprise, Diego was accompanied by his uncle, called Liun (Leone/Lion) in the local dialect. One of his hoes still exists, so worn away that little more than the stick remains, and this, with his family's agreement, we will place in the Gold Museum of Vermogno.

Right back to the time of the foundation of the Biella Association in which he, along with another great goldpanner Fernando Lacchia also from Borriana played a part, Diego always called us "the youngsters". And everything that Diego has always been to us is contained in that word of his, "youngsters". Somewhat father, somewhat grandfather and somewhat teacher.

He rejoiced on seeing the enraptured faces of the children when he got the gold chips to literally jump out of the sand of his wooden pan (the only one I have ever seen to succeed in this enterprise!). He was both promoter and leading actor when it came to accompanying school children along the river in order to hand down his knowledge and to make known to everybody the popular tradition which goldpanning in Italy has become.

Though already ill, he was as enthusiastic as a child when the Association bought the land on which to build its own site for competitions, competitions in which he, frankly, did not willingly take part. His only regret, and this he repeated on his deathbed, was that of not seeing the "coming of age", as it were, of his Association's "offspring"; - of not being able to be present to honour the Friends who will come from abroad to join us at Vermogno for the Euro2001. - These same Friends to whom he and his wife Rina had given hospitality in the garden of their home, transformed for the occasion in September 1998, into a camping-site.

I am transported back in time to 1987 and the World Championships in Tankavaara by a beautiful memory of him. I had arrived at the Gold Village with five friends and we were seven or eight Italians in all. One morning we were asleep in our tents when we heard a voice calling "Stefano, Stefano!". Out we went and there they were: Diego and Rina. An indescribable surprise. Diego who in the dialect of Biella is telling us about his journey in the land of the midnight sun! Magnificent! He was staying at a hotel and each morning, together with his Rina, he had himself taken to the competitions by taxi.

But the most touching moment that I ever spent with him was when he told me of his illness, when I came to understand the gravity of the situation, that I was losing a friend. In the shade of a walnut tree in his garden, in front of me a beer, just back after having accompanied thirty or so excited school-children along the river in search of gold chips, an old friend opened his heart to me, chatting for hours and I didn't go to work in order to stay with him. It was the time I felt no guilt about



whether some client was looking for me. It was the time I didn't mind switching off my mobile phone. It was the time I realised that nothing would ever again be the same.

Diego was a great nugget found by the Biella Association along the tortuous river of life. In order to commemorate him in a fitting way, and in accordance with the wishes of his family, the prizes in the Veterans' and Children's categories at the 2001 European Championships will both be dedicated to him, thus uniting what he was, a veteran, a master in the search for gold, and that which he most loved, putting himself at the disposal of the youngsters, as an expert grandfather who has something to teach them. And we certainly DID learn from him. Thank you Diego.





## **2001 European Championships..**

**I**taly shone brightly, in every respect! This was an exquisite event, with all the ingredients of a truly great championship. Led by their president, Arturo Ramella the Biella Goldprospectors' Association prepared and ran this year's European Goldpanning Championship in northern Italy with great care and attention to detail. This thorough planning and team organisation gave those of us attending a wonderful time and a lesson in how a great championship should be run.

I believe that there are four basic elements to any good championship:

1. A fair competition
2. Local prospecting
3. Music and dancing
4. local camping for competitors.

At Biella, in the Victimula Goldpanners' Arena, all four of these elements were there to be enjoyed by the competitors and their friends and families.

A fair competition is perhaps the most important thing, because without that the whole event is meaningless. This was fair, the international judges just sat in the sun smiling for the three days of competition – as they had nothing to do! Not a single protest! The organisation was flawless with many new ideas being used to ensure the competition went well. For instance, all buckets of sand and gravel were weighed to make sure each heat had identical amounts, the tubes used to count the gold were thrown away and all competitors were given fresh new tubes so that it was impossible for gold to be left in the tube after seeding. The tubes were plastic with a lid that could not trap gold and make counting difficult. I could write a great deal on the excellent work and attention to detail, but for now just let me tell you about the gold. It was very good competition gold. Each piece of gold was a good colour and big enough to be easily seen and counted, but it was flat, very flat! Many people lost gold in the early heats and there was a buzz of excitement as the competitors realised just how difficult it was to keep all the gold and warned each other to, 'go slowly!!'.



*Photo by Iwona Rygielska*

The arena itself was beautiful with permanent, purpose-made, competition troughs and seating. The Biella Goldprospectors' Association own this site and have put love and care into its design and layout. A huge goldpan and fountain water-feature stands beside three, two tonne, podium rocks for the winners to stand on to receive their medals. There are trees within the arena and all around the site which provided very welcome afternoon shade and reminded us that we were in a very special protected park, the Bessa. And why so special? Because this was once a Roman open-cast gold mine, 7km long by 3 km wide – now that's special! During the championship a museum was officially opened in the local village which captures the history of gold working beautifully – well worth a visit. There is also a 'Trulla' displayed. This is a rare sort of tool which was once used to 'pan' for gold on the Ticino river.



There was music and dancing every night – free, there was good camping – free, there was local prospecting – free. (And I'll whisper to you that the local river panning was good – I saw people pan plenty of the beautiful flat gold flakes!)



Just before I give you the results of the European Championship, I would like to say a huge and sincere 'Thank you' from all of the 14 Nations attending to the Biella Goldpanners' Association. You gave us a fine championship, lots of fun and true friendship. All of Italy can be proud of your achievement, and the world respects you for it.

Vince Thurkettle

### **European Championship 2001 Results**

#### **Proficient Men**

- |                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 1. Paolo Rolando      | Italy      |
| 2. Pierino Angoli     | Italy      |
| 3. Rocco Bodrato      | Italy      |
| 4. Gottardo Deon      | Italy      |
| 5. Valter Pizzoglio   | Italy      |
| 6. Valerio Pizzoglio  | Italy      |
| 7. Vince Thurkettle   | Gt Britain |
| 8. Germano Uber       | Italy      |
| 9. Luigi Conti        | Italy      |
| 10. Stephan Rabusseau | France     |

#### **Proficient Women**

- |                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Elena Mocanu         | Italy       |
| 2. Helena Rezna         | Slovakia    |
| 3. Francesca Martini    | Italy       |
| 4. Dagma Chloubova      | Czech Rep   |
| 5. Brigitte Megert      | Switzerland |
| 6. Luce Varlet          | France      |
| 7. Veronika Stedra      | Czech Rep   |
| 8. Jeannine Grundbacher | Switzerland |
| 9. Simona Silvani       | Italy       |
| 10. Pina Vacchini       | Italy       |

#### **National Teams**

1. Italy
2. Czech Rep
3. France

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### **Pictures from the European Championships – next page**

*Photo's by Cecile Thibaud*

**1.ABCd'Oro proudly presents the first water fountain panner**

**2.Panning like in the ancient time with a 'trulla'... up to the finals**

**3. Presentation of the European Championships 2002 (France)**

**4. National Teams podiums: 15 happy gold panner!!**

**5. Mike Gossage enjoying his meal at the French evening**

**6. Champion of France + Champion of Switzerland + Champion of Europe, she's our Junior of the Year. Viva Anais !!!!!**

**7. Some finalists starring for a local newspaper. Time for a song!**

**"We are the champions, my friend... We keep on panning to the end..."**

**8. Exhausted organizers by the Gold Panner Totem**



**Pictures from Italy..**by Cecile Thibaud



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

**World Statistics:**

The following statistics shows how many competitors from WGA member countries have been participating in World Goldpanning Championships over the last six years. (*Competitors of team events as well as veterans is excluded from this since veterans usually participate also to women or men professional categories*).

It shows that competitors from the Czech Republic and Finland have been most active in the events, the French and Slovaks are good runner-ups. Czechs have been most active in the home championships and Finnish has travelled most to the Championships abroad. Also it's estimated that some one hundred Finnish will travel to the World Event -2001 in Australia.

<b>Country</b>	<b>1995 France</b>	<b>1996 <i>Canada</i></b>	<b>1997 Italy</b>	<b>1998 USA</b>	<b>1999 Czech Rep.</b>	<b>2000 Poland</b>	<b>Total</b>
Australia	4	10	6	16	4	3	<b>43</b>
Austria	15	21	16	6	13	12	<b>83</b>
Belgium	3	-	1	3	-	-	<b>7</b>
Canada	5	27	3	12	3	4	<b>54</b>
Czech Rep.	37	27	36	35	206	92	<b>433</b>
Finland	47	43	37	55	70	68	<b>320</b>
France	145	24	29	18	24	12	<b>252</b>
Germany	13	28	19	10	27	27	<b>124</b>
Gt. Britain	24	5	11	9	14	6	<b>69</b>
Italy	44	18	36	17	28	31	<b>174</b>
Japan	9	2	1	4	3	6	<b>25</b>
Netherlands	4	2	2	2	4	5	<b>19</b>
Poland	24	9	26	9	30	84	<b>182</b>
Slovak Rep.	38	3	37	6	93	57	<b>234</b>
Sweden	24	20	14	12	18	12	<b>100</b>
Switzerland	17	30	19	20	22	16	<b>124</b>
South Africa	-	-	1	-	2	10	<b>13</b>
Spain	4	5	2	8	8	8	<b>35</b>
USA	3	13	5	161	8	-	<b>190</b>



## **THE AUSSIE GOLD PROSPECTOR'S STORY.**



Current Story by Cordell Kent

Many people have asked me to write a little on my self, and gold detecting in

Australia. I have just come back from a week away detecting and I thought that this may be a good time to write about the trip.

About a month ago one of my prospecting mates who lived Western Australia (WA), and I finally arranged to go bush to use metal detectors in the search for nuggets. My mate 'Mark' and I had been talking about this trip for some time but had never set aside the time to get away. Earlier this year he had some time off so he and his family came and stayed with us, and I took him out detecting for gold around here. We found gold every day we went out. Anyway this time we both had about a week to spare at the same time, so at short notice I booked a flight to WA, packed my swag and detecting gear and jumped on a plane.

Mark met me at Perth airport and we spent the rest of the day purchasing supplies. The next day we were up early and with the long range fuel tanks filled, we headed off to the gold fields. Like myself, my mate has been involved in detecting for gold for many years, and he lived for many years on the gold he found. He knows the Western Australian goldfields reasonably well and felt that he knew a couple of bits of ground that might be worth hitting. He also arranged for 2 other professional prospectors ('Garry' and 'Rob') to meet with us at our proposed camp site.

Mark and I drove all day and into the night, and finally stopped at a camp site on a privately owned mining tenement (Claim) not far from a town about 650 Km north of Perth. For those who do not know, most of the Australian gold fields are have some form or another of mining claim (lease) on them, and legal access to detect the ground must be sought and given by the lease holder. Heavy penalties can be imposed through the courts for people stealing gold off registered tenements, and beside that the odd prospector has ended up being bruised for being where they should not have been.

The bit of ground Mark had selected for us was on a registered tenement, that was being worked by a bloke who I will call Fred. Fred

has about 1000 acres in 4 adjoining claims. He has worked a large portion of the area using metal detectors, jack hammers and a dry blower. Dry blowers are unique to arid areas of Australia where there is no water to run a 'wet plant'. Dry blowers are large machines that have alluvial dirt dropped into them by front end loaders and the dry blower shakes the soil around, and using air and gravity separates the heavies (gold) from dirt and rock. They can be quite effective and fine gold down to 0.01 of a gram can be recovered. Anyway, Fred had been using his dry blower for some time and had scratched out a living. He had established a good base camp with several old caravans (Americans call them Trailers), and had sheds, a bush shower (with water heated by lighting a fire under a 44 gallon drum), and a toilet (known as a Thunder Box) built over an old mine shaft. The camp was luxurious by our bush standards.

The deal that Mark had struck with Fred was that Mark, Garry, Rob and I would camp at Fred's base camp and use it as our base. We would then go out and detect for gold on Fred's lease, and declare every bit of gold we found, and from this Fred would take a royalty of 50%. This appeared to be a good deal because we knew the area was nugget producing, and that Fred was a hard nosed leaseholder who had never let people onto his claim to detect for gold. Fred didn't want people on his lease because he figured he had a legal right to dig it all up, and he had gone to considerable expense and trouble to get the tools and equipment to dig it up. A few weeks prior to us going up there Fred had gone down to Perth for a few days, and from what he heard later, as he drove off some of the local lads moved in and thumped (claim jumped) his claim until he came back, some of them were supposed to have made a years wages in a few days from a good 'patch' of gold they detected.

The landscape was low rolling hills coming down across gentle slopes, and long flat plains. To the East was a huge salt lake (more than 10km long). The ground was red dirt and had rocks sticking out from it everywhere. It almost looked like the beach when the tide goes out. The vegetation was sparse with a hit of green resulting from the winter (May June)

rains. Ancient Mulga trees 2-3 meters tall grew dispersed across the landscape. I was told how lucky I was to be there in June as it gets to over 45 degrees Celsius for months on end during the summer.

The 4 of us decided to work closely together and split the remaining 50% four ways. This meant that we were working together and that we were not tripping over each other. A deal like this requires the giving and taking of considerable trust, and only works on a handshake. When you are stuck in the bush working for gold, you need to trust your mates, and not have to doubt them. The reason we were working together was for the gold, and we each knew that if we worked professionally together we could collectively cover huge amounts of ground each day, and that the ground we covered would be well detected with little chance of leaving anything behind.

We decided to accept Fred's offer to show us around. Fred piled us in the back of his brand new Toyota 4WD and took us on a tour of his lease. He told us about all the gold he had found, where he had found it, at what depth, and what the ground was like (stone, gravel etc) associated with the gold. All these things were important to us, and we would have learned them anyway, but Fred was saving us precious time.

After the tour we went back to the camp for a brew, and then headed out. We had agreed to start on a small 'flat' half way up a gentle rise. Within 5 mins of us turning on our detectors, each of us had at least one nugget. None were much larger than finger nail clippings, but it was good to be amongst it early. I copped heaps from the 3 Western Australian prospectors. If there is one thing a WA prospector doesn't like it is a prospector from the Eastern States of Australia, and the worst (it seems) are prospectors from Victoria. They gave me heaps, up until about the 30 minute stage when I found a half kilo lump of stone that had 4 ounces of gold visible on it! The specimen was coated with red dirt and the gold poking through made it look great!

Well, great excitement was had, everyone having a look, and a hold before we settled down and kept working. We were all optimistic that more pieces would be found. Though out the day we came back to the vehicles for a break. The first one back got the fire going and put the billy on to heat the water, and

soon after the rest drifted in. A hot bush brew of tea or coffee is relaxing. Those who wanted food ate, the others didn't. We were on gold from the start and we kept exchanging notes of where the gold was found; why it was there, what caused it to be there, where had it come from and where was it going to were the questions that could help us find more gold.

Day two Garry and Rob chained of an area of cap rock that Fred said he had not worked properly. Mark and I decided to work about 1000 meters below the 'run' as this was where larger pieces might have been. The lads had told me that gold in this area tends to be formed where quartz and ironstone 'make' or meet. The 4ozt specimen I had found the day before was a perfect example of this as it showed the quartz, the iron stone and the gold in the middle. The country was dispersed with dark rock formations. I had been told that this was a BIF (banded iron formation) and these were associated with the gold. Mark said that in this area, the first shed of gold from the reefs produced the biggest lumps, and he had found really big bits of gold miles away from where they had shed, but he warned me that although the gold could be big, the nuggets were few and far between. We didn't find any, but the sound of the Kango rock jackhammer and electric generator (gen set) caught our attention so we headed back to where Garry and Rob were merrily digging bits of gold out of the cap rock. Cap rock is a cement type of formation where ancient riverbeds literally go rock hard and they contain sand, gravel rocks and occasionally nuggets. The problem is the extreme hardness of the 'cap', thus the Kango.

We all had a go on the Kango. It is exciting as you know you have a metal target where no rubbish can be so it has to be gold, but the only problem is how big the nugget might be, and how deep it might be. I know men who have had to dig 4ft into the cap to get a nugget out, expecting the nugget to be over 100 ounces, but finding it to be only 4 ounces. Our deepest hole in the cap was only about 400mm, and that took about 25 mins to dig down to. By the way I know one prospector who didn't have a Kango, and he got a good signal in the cap and started digging with a hammer and a cold chisel. It took him the best part of 2 days to drop onto the nugget. His hands were bleeding and bruised, and he

was thoroughly sick of it by the time he recovered his 5 ounce nugget at just over 3 feet.

The next day we decided to work wide of where Fred had been. This new ground held some promise as it was miles from camp and not where the old timers had been, or so we thought. Garry and Rob worked down the hill, Mark went wandering, and so did I. Sometimes when the gold starts to dry up a good way to find some is to have a \$2.00 bet with your mate on who will find the first bit of gold. Mark and I headed off east and west roughly heading toward the head of a gully to the north of us. I read the ground and worked a likely area and found a small piece, so headed off in search of Mark to let him know about it. As I got to the top of a ridge I saw that Mark had reached the head of the gully before me, and he was walking down the hill toward Garry and Rob, but what seemed strange was that he didn't have his detector. We all met at the one time. Mark had detected a really nice 50 gram nugget high up and had brought it down to show the others. Rob had found some nice small ones. I showed Mark the little one I had found and he asked "when" to which I replied "about 5 mins before, his reply was "Bad luck I found this about 6 minutes ago" (by the way, these \$2.00 debts are never called, as they are more for encouragement and a bit of fun).

We all went back up the hill with Mark and figured out where the gold came from and why it was there. We figured out a work plan and hooked in. I found 2 nice bits before dark, and Mark found another bit weighing around 6 grams. Garry, decided to detect just at the head of a little water course in the gully. The sound of his pick beating the ground caught my attention, so I went up and offered to dig for him. Just then the signal came out of the hole. We both knew it might be a good nugget, and sure enough it was. It weighed in at a little over an ounce.

The midgies (sandflies) and mossies (mosquitos) were becoming a pain, and the sun was going out so we headed off to camp.

The next day we were all up early and headed out. Mark and Garry chained off the patch. A patch is an area of ground enriched with nuggets, and chaining is where the detector operator drags a length of chain by a rope behind them. This practise is super efficient,

as the dragged chain scrapes a line along the red dirt and stone, thus permitting the operator to see where the detector has worked. You head off in a straight line and then turn around when you think you are clear of the gold bearing ground. The grid lines that are formed are usually not more than about 18 inches apart.

The closer the better as it is really easy for a person to miss a nugget and the more times you swing the coil over the ground the better chance you have of hearing all that is there. Mark worked high, and Garry started gridding (chainage) about half way. Rob and I worked wide. I came back about mid day having only found one small piece about 2kms away. I bumped into Mark and Garry, and as usual I asked how they did. Mark said they had found a bit and that they had stowed it behind the right hand wheel of the trailer attached to Garry's 4WD. I headed up the hill to see what they had found and about 30ft out I caught sight of gold. Garry had detected a nugget deep in the red dirt, and had become most upset as he knew the signal was gold, but couldn't get anyone's attention to come and see the nugget come up. The nugget weighed 20 ounces, and could easily have been used to chock the wheel of the trailer. Beside the 20 ounce nugget were a few ounces of other nuggets that also been found.

Over the next few days we worked hard, dug heaps of holes, found all kinds of old mining rubbish left over from the gold rush in the late 1800's. Every day it rained, and every day we got eaten alive by the midgies and mossies. For me the beers around the campfire at night were interesting. We all swapped prospecting stories, like "Your first nugget... your biggest nugget....your best day.... your best patch..." Although Garry has been a highly successful prospector for more than 10 years, that 20 ounce nugget was the biggest he had found, so we were all really happy to be present at a landmark in his career. Over the years Mark had found more than his body weight in gold (not bad for a bloke who has just turned 40) with the biggest piece at about 116 ounces. I had found a single nugget weighing 43 ounces in '89, and I can't remember what Rob had found. We all had stories to tell of gold, and I couldn't help but feel that we live in historic times. In the not too distant future the 'easy' gold will be gone, and our children will listen with disbelief to our stories. The other thing to remember is that you only tend to

hear about the good times, but prospectors can go for months 'on the smell of an oily rag' and be out of luck, no money, no food, no fuel, and then have one good day that can bring in wages for a year. Many prospectors here never find enough gold to pay for their detectors, but they love the hobby of prospecting.

Fred had been good, in that he had bull dozed the patch we had found to get us down a little deeper. This worked as we kept on finding more nuggets, but the rain kept on coming down and stopped us from digging more ground. We reckon that the gold is still there, and that the biggest pieces are still down deeper as we had not seen 'bottom'. Over the next few days we worked the patch out, and searched for new ground.

Mark and I went for a drive to see some of his old patches, one of which had gone about 140 ounces. I think in the space of about 4 miles he told me of about 1000 ounces he had found over the years. We got around into a hidden gully that the old timers had worked. Mark stopped the 4WD and showed me where he and some mates had camped years ago. He said he was looking for the old camp fire and when I asked why he told me that when they were going to make a fire to boil the billy he had jokingly said that he had better wave the coil over the site just in case they were building the fire on gold. He did wave the coil over the proposed fire site and found a half ounce piece right where the fire was going to be!

We didn't find his old fire site but as we walked back to the 4WD I spec'd (saw with my eyes) two small nuggets lying on the surface of the ground. Mark worked this area for the rest of the day and found about a dozen small pieces I detected another nugget then spec'd a 3 gram piece lying out in the

open shining in the sun (who needs detectors to find gold!)

When the trip came to an end we waxed up (divided up) the gold. For a week we had found more than a Kilo of nuggets. My share worked out to be just over the weight of the specimen I had found in the first 30 mins so with the consent of my partners I took it, and a few others home. I can remember thinking on the flight over that I needed about 4 ounces to make the trip pay for its self, and here I was going home with more than 4 ounces. Years ago I used to like fishing, and I know some folks like golf, but while these things are enjoyable they really do not compare with prospecting for gold, and it is hard to have a fishing trip or a day at the golf that pays for its self!

I love gold and I love the search for gold. I love getting out into the bush with good mates. I love the history, tradition, high technology, skill, hard work and considerable luck that goes into finding gold.

If anyone has any questions about Australian gold prospecting, or Australian gold, please feel free to contact me. I own Australian Native Gold Pty Ltd, a business that deals in Australian gold nuggets, and if you come to Ballarat, Victoria, Australia please drop into our new shop (The Mining Exchange Gold Shop), we would love to see you. If I haven't been encouraged to part with it, you might also see the 4 ounce specimen I found on this trip. By the way our website is at <http://www.netconnect.com.au/~ozgold> and our email address is [ozgold@netconnect.com.au](mailto:ozgold@netconnect.com.au)

Cordell Kent  
Managing Director  
Australian Native Gold

Pty. Ltd.



## **2001 World Goldpanning Championships**



### **Welcome Strangers to Australia Guide for Survival Downunder**



***Jumping Gerry shows real nuggets to an amazed Emma in the bushland near Maryborough***

### **Welcome to Victoria**

#### **State Snapshot:**

- Founded in 1851
- 227 514 sq km
- 3% of Australia's area
- Population 4.3 million
- Capital city is Melbourne
- 
- **Weather in October** – Victoria's weather is renowned for being changeable even on the same day. The average temperature should reach 20° C on most days. You can expect some rain showers during October.
- **Driving hints** – we drive on the left hand side of the road. Speed limits are 110 km per hour on the freeways, 100 km per hour on the highways and 40 – 60 km per hour in residential areas. Speed cameras operate throughout Victoria and there are hefty fines for speeding. Watch out for kangaroos, wombats and bunyips on our highways.
- **Smoking/Drinking Rules.** No smoking in public buildings, restaurants, transport. Alcohol consumption in unlicensed public areas is prohibited. Drinking age is 18 years.
- **Quarantine.** Because we are a country isolated from the rest of the World, Australia has strict quarantine rules to protect our unique environment. You will need to fill in a declaration prior to entry into Australia to ensure you do not bring in any items e.g. food, seeds, wooden objects which may be harmful or bring in diseases.
- **Entertainment.** Every night.
- **Opening Parade.** We encourage all overseas participants to wear National costume or 1851 period costume. We would also like every country to bring many mini flags of their country.

**Currency,** Pricing in Australia is in \$ and cents. Notes are made of plastic and come in denominations of \$5, 10, \$20, \$50 and \$100. The exchange rate is currently \$1AUD = \$.052US. Our currency is floated on the international foreign exchange market so the value

changes daily. All major credit cards are accepted – Visa, Mastercard, Diners Club, American Express.

- **Cost of Living.**

Some indications of approximate costs:

Loaf of Bread	\$2.00
1 litre of milk	\$1.40
1 kg lamb/pork	\$5 - \$10
1 kg beef	\$10+
1 litre unleaded fuel	\$1
Beer - slab	\$20 - \$30
Beer – pot	\$2.50
Dining out:	
Breakfast	\$5 - \$10
Lunch	\$5 - \$15
Dinner	\$10 - \$20 (Main course)

- **Camping**

Free in State Park (out of town)

Camping grounds/caravan park – approx \$10/person/night – shower, toilet and facilities.

- **Transport**

Public transport Melbourne to Maryborough – approx \$40 one-way.

A shuttle bus service operates directly from Melbourne airport to Ballarat or Bendigo.

Hire vehicles are available from the airport.

If you require assistance with transport, please contact the Association.

- **Web Site**

Visit our web site for updated information [www.visitvictoria.com/gold2001](http://www.visitvictoria.com/gold2001)

### **Requirements for Prospecting**

#### **MINER'S RIGHT**

1. A Miner's Right entitles the holder to search for minerals on –
  - a) Private land with the consent of the owner or occupier
  - b) Crown land
2. A Miner's Right is current for 2 years.

#### **OBLIGATIONS OF HOLDER**

1. The holder of a Miner's Right who searches on land under that Right must not –
  - a) Use any equipment for the purposes of excavation on the land, other than non-mechanical hand tools; or
  - b) Use explosives on the land; or
  - c) Remove or damage any tree or shrub on the land; or
  - d) Disturb any Aboriginal place or Aboriginal object on the land.
2. The holder of a Miner's Right must repair any damage to the land arising out of the search.

COST OF MINER'S RIGHT: \$19.00 FOR A 2 YEAR PERIOD

Miner's Rights can be obtained at the Information Centre, Maryborough

All prospecting equipment you can beg, borrow or hire.

### **Proposed Day/Night Trips**

The following are alternatives for sightseeing and prospecting in our local region on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 22 – 24 October. If you are interested in participating in any of these arranged tours, please advise our Association so that we may have an indication of numbers.

1. Sovereign Hill by day and Blood on the Southern Cross night show (Tuesday) - Ballarat
2. Gum San Chinese Gold Museum, Ararat and Pyrenees Vineyards/Wineries
3. Mine Tour (Bendigo Mining/Central Deborah)
4. Local historic gold sites including the Welcome Stranger Discovery Walk
5. Local prospecting and panning
6. Possum Prowl (night)
7. Japanese yurita school (Monday afternoon)

### **Novelty Events**

- **Golden Duo Event**

This event is for any pair of panning friends or couples who will pan simultaneously in the panning pools with the elected captain bottling all the gold and signalling the finish. Final concentrates may be passed to the team captain.

Time allowed: 10 minutes only.

- **Tri-pan**

This will be a three-person relay tag race involving the use of three different national pans but must include:

Japanese pan – first panner

Flat pan – second panner

Batea – third panner.

Each panner shall be required to bottle their own gold separately and place their capped bottle on the yurita pan for judging. Special yurita classes have been arranged by the Japanese Goldpanning Association to assist this cultural exchange.

A time limit of 20 minutes shall apply.

- **Snatch and Grab**

This event is for those fun-loving gold panners who can demonstrate their skill using unusual containers as gold pans. The rules for this competition shall be announced at the competition.

- **Gold 150 Man/Gold 150 Woman**

This is an endurance event where competitors shall be required to pan 150 lbs of gravel for the reward of respectable nuggets. This event is to celebrate the 150 Years of Gold Discovery in Victoria.

- **Aussie Relay**

The Aussie relay race will be a feature event and will involve willing competitors in teams of 5 to undertake traditional Australian semi-skilled tasks for a truly Australian golden reward for the winning team. This event will be part of the grand finale and presentation on Sunday. This is open to gold panners who enjoy drinking, eating, bushcraft, sport and gold panning.

There will also be Jackpot Panning on Thursday and a Nugget Rush on Saturday

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## "Pienkna Polska"



*"Northern and Southern Hemispheres enjoy the golden bond of friendship in Poland last year – Gerry is keen to learn from Wieslaw Choragwicki the secret of his golden beard"*

Along with Nick, Martin, Fred, Gloria and Peter, I attended the International Gold Panning Championships in Poland last year.

I would struggle to think of having had a better time ever than this trip. What a revelation to me! I had been accustomed to travel in Australia and have seen much of this great country of ours. But to travel to and through Poland was a huge experience for me.

I find it so extremely hard to explain all the emotions that I felt during the two weeks I was there.

"Pienkna Polska" – Beautiful Poland!

We were so lucky with the weather. A little rain, but as somebody pointed out – it wouldn't be the International Gold Panning Championships if there wasn't some rain.

The countryside was awesome to me. Imagine standing in places where so much had happened before. And here I was, an insignificant visitor from the other side of the world, standing on the spot where Kosciuszko proclaimed the Independence of Poland!

The hospitality of the Polish people was terrific. We had some memorable days and nights at the hands of various Polish hosts. And the international visitors – what can one say? Imagine being flung into the Tower of Babel, but still being able to communicate. It was a joyous moment when a Czech, a Pole, an Australian and an Italian got together and had a terrific conversation, though having to translate for and through each other!

The wonderful feeling of camaraderie that permeated the competitors was a palpable thing.

I am looking forward to the coming championships, which we are hosting, and I hope that all our visitors – international, interstate and local – experience as good and as wonderful a time in Maryborough, Victoria as I did in Poland.

**Gerry Tobin**



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### ARROWTOWN – Born of Gold

Arrowtown came into existence in 1862 when a Californian miner William Fox discovered gold in the Arrow River just a few hundred

meters from where the town stands today. Once the news got out the rush was on and the Arrow River became famed as one of the richest gold bearing rivers for its size in the world. William Fox and his party of miners panned out over 42lbs (19 kgs) of gold in just two weeks.

Today gold panning is still a major drawcard for visitors to this living historical mining town, the river below the village is set aside for recreational gold panning, and results are almost guaranteed. Other gold bearing rivers including the world famous Shotover River

(said to be the richest in the world) are accessible for gold panning most within an hours drive from Arrowtown.

As many of these rivers are in mountainous locations certain safety precautions are necessary as conditions can change quickly, local guides can arrange tours or panning expeditions.

The Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust is the parent body of The New Zealand Gold Panning events and have produced a free brochure on the Otago Goldfields and Heritage trails, these are available upon request and point out the recreational gold panning sites around Otago.

Arrowtown is to host the New Zealand National Gold Panning Championships on the



3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2001 which is one week after the World Championships in Australia. This would be an ideal opportunity for those overseas competitors and prospectors to combine a trip to New Zealand along with competing in our Panning Competition and prospecting some of our Creeks and Rivers.

For further information please contact any of the following:

Arrowtown Promotion & Business Association inc.

website: <http://www.arrowtown.org.nz>

e-mail: [apa@arrowtown.org.nz](mailto:apa@arrowtown.org.nz)

Address: 49 Buckingham Street, Arrowtown, New Zealand

Justin Eden  
The Gold Shop  
29 Buckingham Street, Arrowtown, New Zealand  
e-mail: [justineden@extra.co.nz](mailto:justineden@extra.co.nz)  
fax: 0064 3 4421198

Destination Queenstown  
website: [www.queenstown-nz.co.nz](http://www.queenstown-nz.co.nz)  
e-mail: [sharonw@queenstown-nz.co.nz](mailto:sharonw@queenstown-nz.co.nz)

Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust  
e-mail: [goldfields@nzsouth.co.nz](mailto:goldfields@nzsouth.co.nz)  
website: <http://www.nzsouth.co.nz/goldfields>  
phone: Roberta on 0064 3 4451516

Regards,  
**Justin Eden**



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## **World News From Koos Schoenmaker..**

### **Malesia, Kuala Lumpur**

A recent find of a nugget, value about USD 2700 caused a real gold fever. Thousands of people were digging in the area where it has been found. The police tried – in vain – to send them away.

### **Australia**

A plane has crashed in Queensland. Eight men died. The plane was on its way from Perth to a gold mining country, 600 km from Perth. It seems that the crew (2 men) and the passengers (6 gold diggers) got out of conscious by failure of the ventilation. The plane flew during 5 hours on its automatic pilot. They found the plane 2840 km's from Perth near the town ofBurketown.

### **Russia**

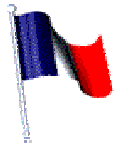
In order to find valuable minerals, geologists drilled a shaft in the peninsula Kola, north of Russia. They reached a depth of nearly 20,000 m! If they really did find anything, they don't want to tell

*" Editor's note: The Kola superdeep borehole (SD-3) is the world's deepest exploratory scientific well (12.264 m) and has provided unique data on the structure, composition and state of stress in the ancient continental crust. This information is provided by the Geological Survey of Finland. Inkeri Syrjänen – Editor"*

### **South Africa**

1. The biggest diamond mine, so called "Bighole" is in Kimberley. The hole outline about 2 kms and a depth of 1,400 meters, has been produced about 15 millions of carats. This hole is the remains of a volcano a so called caldera. There are a lot of these kind of caldera's. Also in the north/west territories of Canada, there are now lakes and you can see them from out of a plane as a circle. Not every caldera becomes a lake like the Ngorongo crater in Africa.
  2. The refrigerator system, capacity of 2,500 tons of ice, is running a number of revolutions in the deepest gold mine in the world: the Western Deep Levels in Carltonville. If not running, the temperature will reach a level of 55/o C. and more! In that case the poor gold diggers will die very quick.
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## HAVING FUN WITH THE FRENCHIES...



From 28 April to 1 May 2001, an international gold panning meeting took place in Cusy, France, under the supervision of the association RHON'OR.



The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of **OR-ALP** was launched, were participants were to encounter gold bearing sands, regional legends and a little surprise...

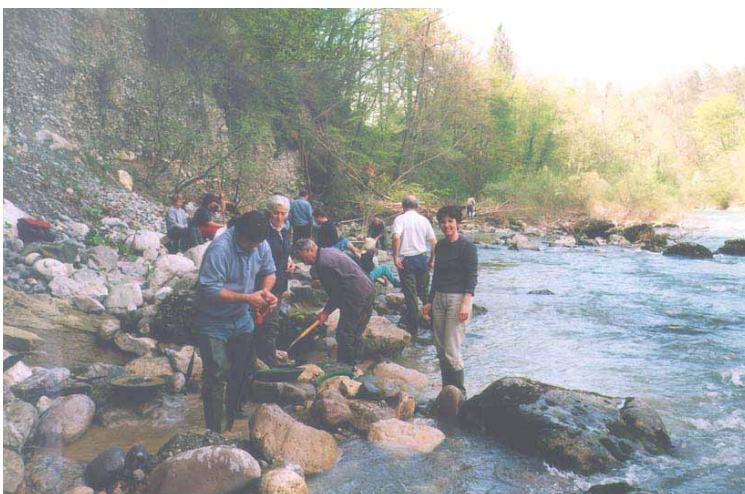
On Sunday morning, the most courageous panners hiked to a local curiosity: the cave of Banges. Though minor in size, this cave is

high in reputation. The legend had it that gold could be found in the cave and that the devil was coming out of it at night, with bags full of the precious metal. Another myth, or rather a rumor, is that some people from neighboring Switzerland used to come there around 1800 to wash gold inside. To support that story, guides are showing sluice-like stairs dug directly in the floor and leading to the bottom river. Strange to go all the trouble for being easily spotted carrying loads of earth up in the mountain...

*Of course, gold was the center of the week-end and prospectors roamed the river, no matter how difficult the access. The icy waters prevented crossing the river, so there were some dead trees climbing, rock-to-rock jumping... and wet feet.*



*"With river bottom out of reach, participants worked the bordering sand deposits. No nugget this time, but enough flakes for all of them to go home with a nice sample".*



And now, what can you give the gold panner who already had gold, history lessons, delicious local food and wine? A little FUN!



**--THE YUKON SPECIAL--**

"Once upon a time, 3 prospectors were spending the winter in the Yukon. After a month, they ran out of beverage. The only solution was to go to the next town. Since snow was everywhere, they cut a tree to make skis out of it. But the tree was so small they could only make one pair. And none of them wanted to stay in the house, for fear the others wouldn't come back. So they decided the 3 of them would all go together, reach the river to pan some gold to pay for the beers, go to town and then back home."

Easier said than done and the first team of volunteers (or rather the first 'volunteered' team) was soon on stage for a demonstration. Let me introduce, from right to left, Jacques Brest, Gilles Gautier and Stephane Rabusseau, respectively presidents of RHON'OR, ORE and APOR.



**Ha! Easy for us, tough guys...**



**Okay, maybe not THAT easy...**



**Right. NOT easy. HEEEEEEELP!**

**Article by CMA, June 2001**

By respect for our elders Presidents, we won't show the final picture. And also because they confiscated it. Instead, we present this unique picture of the 1<sup>st</sup> French Cancan Masculine Club:



**C'mo  
n  
guys!  
Highe**



## ***Pilgrim's Rest – Potential World Heritage Site..***

By Christine Rowe

There are currently three sites in South Africa that enjoys World Heritage status. These sites are Robben

Island, Sterkfontein and St. Lucia. Pilgrim's Rest and the Blyde Canyon have been on the tentative list since 1998. However, a great deal will need to be done in terms of a proper management plan, conservation policy and long term planning for Pilgrim's Rest, before we can formally be nominated for listing.

Pilgrim's Rest and the Blyde Canyon should be nominated as a unit because of the Belvedere power station and the crucial role that it played in the mining history. The fact that the Belvedere power station is situated in the Canyon provides a vital link between natural heritage and industrial heritage. The

nomination and ultimate listing will prove to be extremely valuable to both.

Pilgrim's Rest has a universal value, being the cradle of the gold mining industry in South Africa, and on an international level, the SA gold mining industry played such a major role. One of the most important facts that will count in our favour is that no other gold mining site is currently on the World Heritage list. Pilgrim's Rest is also the best protected industrial heritage site in the whole of Africa.

Listing would be of great economic benefit to the Pilgrim's Rest community and surrounding area. It would also secure heritage conservation at Pilgrim's Rest and support the long term preservation of the village as living museum.

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## ***50 Years in the Goldfields..***



***Yrjö Korhonen - a living legend of Lapland's goldfields***

Yrjö Korhonen, the last old-timer and living legend, celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the goldfields on 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2001 in the Lemmenjoki goldfields, Finland. Some one hundred friends took a boat along the river and then wandered up the "shortness of breath" hill to the Morgam Kultala in Lemmenjoki. This wilderness in a beautiful valley between the two treeless mountains where the night was as light as a day.

Yrjö came to goldfields 1951 just to "check" what it is to dig

for gold but something made him stay there permanently. He has worked mainly in the Lemmenjoki area, but he is also the one who founded the Tankavaara Goldvillage in the 1970s together with two other gold prospectors when they opened the goldpanning site for visitors. However, soon the wilderness called again and he willingly left the busy tourist business behind. The wilderness has always played an important role in the life of Yrjö and he has actively hunted and fished but also filmed some rare animals in Lapland like wolf and bears. He earned the nickname "bear"-Korhonen. He has also travelled around the most important goldfields of the world and participated to every World Goldpanning Championships as well as Finnish National Championships.

Yrjö is now 79-years old and still spends all the summers in his gold claim in Jäkälä-Äytsi in the Lemmenjoki wilderness. Now the younger ones take care of most of the work but Yrjö still gives valuable advice and good tips regarding gold panning.



**Discovery of an antique gold mine in Belgium..**

About 11 years ago, I started prospecting the Belgian creeks in the Ardennes with my friend Jean Detaille. I met him in 1987 at a mineral show in Liège and he accepted to teach me goldpanning. All these years, we went prospecting in all weathers always hoping to find something bigger.

We have had two gold rushes in Belgium. The first one took place about 2000 years ago and lasted for centuries and the second one began in 1875 and came to an end around 1920. Nowadays very nice gold can still be found in the creeks but the quantities have become so small that many give up rapidly. We only get what our ancestors left us and it is not much. A good day for us means a few hundred gold flakes of an average size of 0.8mm. Sometimes we have exceptional days with more than a thousand flakes. Personally, my best day was 0.3 gr. Gold flakes are so hard to find that we don't weigh the gold most of the time, we count it. However, the gold has an extremely interesting morphology. It's always very jagged with little quartz inclusions just like a mini-nugget.

During these 11 years we made a few lucky discoveries but truly nothing had prepared us to the discovery I'm going to tell you about.

Everything started 6 or 7 years ago. An historian from Liège, Lambert Grailet, asks me to explore a specific region in the Ardennes to prove the presence of gold. He has seen tailings and wants to use the results of my prospecting to illustrate a book he is writing. He also mentions a hole named "le Trou des Massotais<sup>1</sup>" which according to the legend is concealing a gallery. Since it is a legend and that, at the time, I have more interest for the real gold, I neglected his invitation.

By the end of '99 Lambert still has his own conviction and starts emptying the hole which is full of water. A journalist helps him and after a week of pumping with a tiny pump, they discover the entrance of a real gallery. I don't more to be convinced and I start looking for the hole as well. Jean does the same but unfortunately we can't find the correct location. Finally, in march 2000 we try once more and this time, after hours of walking in the country, we are able to locate the site. The hole is surrounded by tailings that clearly

come from the ground. By chance we have goldpans with us and we start washing some dirt. At the first pan I can't believe my eyes. There is a tiny little flake of gold, right at the bottom of the pan. Oh, it's not big, only around 0.1mm, but it represents a unique discovery in Belgian history. For the first time, we are able to prove the existence of a real hard rock gold mine in Belgium. We find more in the following pans but the size remains very small. Jean and I are so happy that we literally dance around the hole. Although the discovery is small in size, even according to Belgian standards, it symbolises the achievement of a long quest. Everything a goldprospector can hope for has come true.

The next Saturday we go back on the spot hoping to find more; and more we found. The flakes are bigger in some places. The gold is extremely jagged. Clearly it hasn't rolled at all. I even find a big flake of around 1cm sandwiched in its mother rock. The same night I contact Lambert Grailet to inform him of our discovery. Since a journalist was initially involved Lambert wants to be the first to write about it to be credited the discovery. But, overwhelmed by his enthusiasm, he launches a real media frenzy. Every Belgian TV or newspaper talks about the mine. The owner of the ground, shocked by this sudden gold fever prohibits all access to the site and hires extra ranchers to chase any intruder away. The University of Liège, Brussels and even the ministry of economical affairs get involved. The fever lasts a few weeks and then everything is forgotten. Jean and I regret a little that we talked so fast. It is now impossible to go back there. So for a few months we do as if we give up. But secretly I contact the university of Liège to organise an archaeological study of the site.

Around mid-October, Everything is forgotten and we obtain the authorisation to empty the hole again. Jean and I are filled with joy. We both feel that there is more there under. And we were right. The result will exceed our wildest dreams.

After two days of pumping with heavy material and a team of 10 people, we discover a real antique gallery still supported by wooden structures incredibly well preserved in the acid water. It looks as if the workers left the day before. The roof has partially collapsed but a 10 meter long section remains

untouched. I even find a wooden shovel on the tailings at the end of the gallery. The wall shows chisel or pick marks. During our free time, Jean and I wash frenetically dirt to collect more gold flakes. It is unbelievable! Those two days were the best of our gold prospector life. In total, I was lucky enough to find more than 6000 flakes of gold, some of which were around 7 mm. More than in a year's prospection.

Today, the specialists still study the findings which have generated many questions. How old is the mine? The youngest it can be is around 1750 and the oldest is 2000 years. How did the gold form and what is the extent of the deposit? Geologists are confronted to a puzzle. And so on. Scientists now take it over and try to find answers. But as far as we are concerned we are happy enough to have had the opportunity to be associated to such discovery and to have experienced such a wonderful adventure.

By the time I'm writing these lines, I have learned extremely good news about the mine and we found more interesting elements. Unfortunately, I still must keep it secret. A study group has been created and we want to avoid any new media frenzy. But who knows? I might tell you more if you come and visit us at our second Belgian Goldpanning Championships on 25 and 26 August 2001. There, you will even be exceptionally allowed to pan for nice Belgian gold in a historic place. Interested? Please feel free to contact me at :

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Golden greetings to all  
**Bruno**

### ***Lode gold discovered in the Swiss Alps*** ***By Manfred Gurtner***



*Lode gold pieces  
from the  
Surselva area  
(Swiss Alps)*

*"A hiker found two dozen of gold nuggets in the Swiss mountains, weighing one kilo ...." wrote the German newspaper "Bild" on March 27<sup>th</sup> 2001. The German television channel RTL already spoke about „10 kilos of gold found in the Alps". Further you could read in the newspapers „.....The Swiss fear a gold rush similar to the Klondike-rush of 1849...." or „..... a gold rush in the Swiss Alps. German diggers plan an expedition".*

Franz-Josef Andorf was cited in the newspaper Bild: *„This find really shook me up. As soon as I have everything prepared I am heading off...."* He confirmed me he never said that.

Much was written and said about this extraordinary gold discovery – unfortunately a lot of wrong stories. The media often gave us a wrong impression. They suggested that the gold would lay around here in Switzerland and everybody could collect it.

In the following report I try to rectify and give the true facts about this gold strike based on several articles I read and talks I had:



The Goldwaescherzytig of the Swiss Goldprospectors Association mentions in No. 2/2001 that a gold discovery was made in the Swiss canton Grison in July/August 2000. It was an extraordinary discovery of lode gold – the largest find known up to now in Swiss gold history. The discovery consists of approximately 15 pieces in various size. The whole discovery weights 1.0 to 1.4 kilograms of gold. The biggest piece – measuring 30 to 40 centimeters – contains 400 grams of gold. Its price might go up to 200'000.00 Swiss Francs.

The biggest pieces are kept away for the museums and municipalities in the area of the discovery. The public should have access to these biggest pieces. The medium and smaller pieces between Swiss Francs 25.00 and 18'000.00 are available for sale to interested people. RockArt Gallery in Arosa/Switzerland coordinates the sales (Mr. Bruno Higgins, tel. + fax +41 / 81 / 377 01 00).

RockArt Gallery took charge of the whole discovery for organizing the cleaning and the selling of the pieces on behalf of the finder.

Already last year some pieces where on sale at gem and mineral exchanges in Zurich and Basle.

The name of the finder and the place where the gold was found are kept secret. We only know that the gold is from a quartz lode in the Surselva area and the finder had a rock-hounding permit. History shows that letting people know about the exact location attracts to much tourists, collectors, rock-hounds or prospectors.

Rockhounding is regulated in most municipalities of the canton Grison by local law and needs a permit. Please direct all inquiries to the municipality where you intend to rockhound. The result of rockhounding without permit is a high fine as well as loosing all pieces found.

The discovery was reported to the municipality on which land it was made. This is prescribed by the local rockhounding law for extraordinary discoveries like this. Shortly after the Museum of Natural History in Berne was informed and they were given some pieces for examination. The examination by Mr. Beda Hofmann PhD proofs that the gold originates from the Surselva area.

The cleaning of the pieces took a lot of time. No errors were allowed. This is the reason why some smaller pieces served as test pieces to find out the best cleaning method.

Mr. Higgins initiated „x-ray screening“ to have a good foundation for cleaning. He traveled to the United States in March 2001 to further let treat the pieces by specialists. These specialists have a 30 year experience in cleaning gold-quartz-pieces from California mines where similar pieces are found still today.

The cleaning process proceeds as following:

1. x-ray screening
2. Move away the dummy rock to expose the quartz
3. Grind the quartz until shortly before reaching the gold layer.
4. Cover non-auriferous zones to protect against the acid (these zones later become the base)
5. Dilute to protect the quartz from soaking to much acid
6. Acid-bath for 5 days while controlling twice a day the progress
7. Watering, treating the rock with different techniques

The lode shall be further exploited and researched scientifically. Finally the secret of the exact location will have an end and the location will be disclosed. But first the place of the discovery must be fully documented, integrating specialists in this process. Many famous locations of gold discoveries from near and far are documented uncompletely. This error shall not be made this time.

I like to thank Mr. Higgins of the RockArt Gallery who provided many interesting details to this report.

### **Golden Mammoths..**



In 1998 Mrs Marjut Telilä, a professional gold miner, made a very unusual discovery in the gold fields of Lemmenjoki, Finland. She picked up from the screen a gold nugget of 251 grams! It is the third biggest alluvial nugget ever found in Finland and the biggest in Lemmenjoki – the richest gold field of Lapland. Now the nugget is sold and even if they didn't give the price to the public it's known that last year at the auction it was asked 600 000 FIM (about \$86,000 USD) for the nugget and it can be assumed that the purchase price was near that amount. At least the nugget is insured for 1,9 million FIM (\$272,000 USD). A record in gold price?

It is very rare to find big gold nuggets in Lapland. The biggest one was found in 1935 the weight was almost 393 grams. According to the Geological Survey of Finland the nuggets of less than half kilos are the biggest which ever can be found in Lapland's goldfields. In that way Lappish gold nuggets are ten times smaller than the biggest in the Alaska gold fields and hundred times smaller than the giant nuggets in Australia.



*"Little Mammoth". Photograph by courtesy of Mr. Juhani Lehtikainen.*

A year before Mrs. Telilä found the special nugget she had a dream that something remarkable would be found on their claim. However, in the middle of summer their machines broke and they had to quit their work for that summer. Then she thought that the dream didn't come true. But at the beginning of next summer that unique piece of gold appeared. First it was a little bit difficult to weight the nugget since they didn't have enough counterweight before they noticed to use a small ouzo-bottle. The shape of the nugget looks like a pig with two humps and so it received the name "*Little Mammoth*".

The buyer of the "*Little Mammoth*" is Mr. Juhani Lehtikainen – Owner and Director of the leading stove construction company "Nunnalahden Uuni Oy" ([www.nunnauuni.fi](http://www.nunnauuni.fi)) whose tradition dates back over one hundred years. They also made recently a big discovery; some of their special soapstone has the "pinstripe" and it was thought to be somehow "broken" and unfit for use. During the past 19 years this "pinstripe"-soapstone was transported straight from the mine to the storage piles. Now it was discovered after research that the soapstone with that parallel stripes has the best heat-resistant in Europe, and it stores heat better than other types. It is the best possible material for the stoves! They have millions of tons of this soapstone in the storage piles and more in the mine and no one else in world has this kind of soapstone. The deposit received the name "*Big Mammoth*"

To celebrate this great discovery Mr. Lehtikainen bought the golden "*Little Mammoth*" as both the gold digging and soapstone quarrying are mining activities. As he said; "*I have found my mother lode, I hope that one day the mother lode of 'Little Mammoth' will be found, too*".

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### **CORRECTION**

*In the last issue of Golden Times it was reported that Czech and Slovak Championships will take place on 24th- 26th July at Zlate Hory, Czech Rep.*

*Days and place were right but the month was wrong. Thus the Championships will take place ON AUGUST not July. We are sorry about the wrong information.*

*Pirjo Muotkajärvi -editor*

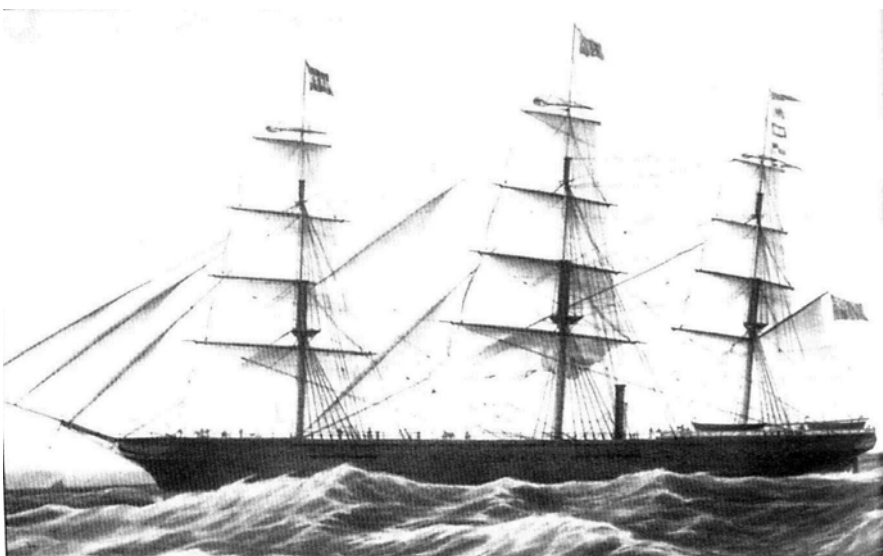


## ***Australian Gold – In Wales!***



*Poster advertising the Liverpool to Melbourne trip*

Two years ago I sat under a gum tree in the blazing Australian sun telling a hundred Ballarat school children the saddest story I know. Children are heartless little people and the only one to get upset by the story was me. The tragedy started in 1859 when a ship, the 'Royal Charter' left Melbourne, Victoria to sail to Liverpool, England. It was a new type of ship made of iron and using both sails and a small steam engine. But most importantly, it was taking 376 people, gold miners and their families, home from their Australian diggings. Most of them had struck it rich and were carrying a fortune in gold nuggets and dust; many had promised their relatives in England that they would never be poor again. If you want to hear the full story, buy me a beer and I'll tell you, but for now the awful destiny for all but 18 of them was to be killed dreadfully as the ship was driven by a hurricane onto the rocks of an island just off the north-west coast of Wales. Their nuggets and gold dust, and kilos of gold bars and gold coins that the ship was carrying now lie in only 6 meters of water, a few meters from the seashore.



*The Royal Charter*

Now I'm not a treasure hunter, but I can dive with sub-aqua equipment and I do know a little of how gold settles into bedrock holes and cracks, so this shipwreck has long been in my mind to visit. After years of thinking about it, last summer I finally got a team together and we went to Wales to prospect for this Australian gold that was found and lost again.

My team was made up of six people,

four divers and two to stay on shore. Mike Gossage (you may know him as the man who loves strange hats) and my wife Jeannie were on shore. My divers were Chris Kearning, Lorna and

Charlie Field (our expert diver) and me. My children Daisy, Jack and Ralph, and Chris's daughter Holly helped the shore team. This was an exciting time, and after so long I was finally going to hunt for this special gold. In my mind there were cracks stuffed with nuggets and coins just under the sand! On the first evening, after meeting and pitching our tents, I went down and sat on the rocks to think. I thought of all the people who died here, whose gold was torn from their bodies by surging waves and sharp rocks. Am I 'grave robbing' I wondered? But as night fell I became more and more happy that these were tough prospectors, nature had snatched back their gold, and I think they would be amused to watch a not-very-tough-pro prospector try and win it back!

Working under the sea is, as you may imagine, much harder than working on land. The two main factors are being almost weightless, and not having much time. The lack of time is the biggest problem. On a river I might work for 8 to 12 hours a day, in the sea it's more likely to be 1 to 2 hours a day. Other important factors are the tides and currents, and being much more restricted by bad weather. So to help us identify any pattern of gold deposits, first we sampled the rocky shore. This, we hoped, would allow us to focus the underwater work on the best areas.

The cliffs and shorelines are made up of sloping beds of limestone, which is full of gloriously tempting holes and cracks. Newspaper reports after the wreck in October 1859 wrote of the little pools on the shore being, *'full of bright gold coins like sea-shells'*. For three days we worked in two teams, one digging and sucking out cracks with Henderson pumps and the other team using the Minelab SD 2200 detector to hunt for trapped coin or



*The cliffs and shoreline at low tide*

nugget. Well, the detecting team found hundreds of fishing weights, modern coins and bullets, and lead sheet and copper nails from the wreck, but not a speck of gold. The digging team had better luck and found three distinct zones with a little gold dust scattered in the cracks. Three places where a body's money belt or gold bag had been torn open. But it was never more than a gram or two. We decided that the local villagers, who had looked for the gold for 140 years, had been very thorough! But what of under the sea?!

We dived in pairs the six meters down the undersea limestone cliff to the seabed. It was beautiful, good visibility and crabs, fish, anemones and starfish everywhere, but where was the gold! Our under-sea prospecting equipment was simple, a pry bar, a bucket and a modified Henderson pump for each pair. We looked for seabed cracks and began working. Nothing under the sea is easy and another special problem is visibility. Once we started working clouds of muddy silt swirled up until sometimes it was totally black and all work was done just by touch. When there is no current – you can't see, when there is a current – you get dragged away! We worked hard each day for as long as we had air in our scuba tanks and took buckets of stinking mud and gravel to the surface to pan out. Working along the base of the cliff we found gold in many of the cracks, but never much. It was exciting, but gently disappointing as we sampled so many places and never found a 'hot spot'. So what about the actual wreck?

In my dreams, the “Royal Charter” shipwreck was on the limestone bedrock, a twisted mass of iron, rocks, and kelp seaweed. I had read books to this effect, it is not true. We knew that another team of divers had used an airlift to dig for the wreck. So, we went to the hole they had dug. It was huge, about nine meters in diameter and four meters deep. The bottom of the hole was a mass of loose seaweed with large pieces of jagged iron rising up, scary! Braving the large crabs, which were hiding under the seaweed, we used the pumps to take samples off the bottom. It was soon clear that these other divers had not reached the bedrock bottom – again we found only some specks of gold.



*(Preparing to dive (from right to left the author, Chris Kearning and Holly))*

I think that most people would not believe that we can know that hundreds of ounces of gold lay in shallow water in an area of only one hundred meters by fifty meters, and yet it can not be reached (not without massive engineering equipment, anyway). But after all of our work, I know the gold is as safe as in any bank! Nature has taken back her gold and has protected it with sea cliffs, six meters of water, four to five meters of sand and mud, then huge sheets of iron plate, rusted solidly to the limestone seabed. This is where the gold has settled, and it will take an exceptional prospector to find it.

Many stories like this finish with the writer saying, “I didn’t find much gold, but I don’t mind as I’m much richer for the experience”. Well, I do mind, and I am bloody annoyed that we did not find much gold! But, I do not mind the dead prospector’s ghosts laughing at us; they paid very dearly for this gold.

**Vincent Thirkettle**

*The  
Golden Beer  
of Lapland*

LAPIN  
KULTA  
OLUT

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