

# Golden Times

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*The 2002 World Championship National Team Winners*

**In this issue:**

Message from the President	2
Treasurers report	3
Editorial	4
16th International German Gold-Panning-Championship 2002	5
European Championship 2002	6
Goldpanning Championship of Slovak and Czech Republic	7
Reports on the 2002 World Goldpanning Championships	8
World Goldpanning Championships in pictures	15
2002 Annual WGA meeting Minutes	21
National Representation list	24
Even the tiny bits are valuable	25
Two Gold Museums from Middle Europe	26
Dates for your diary	27

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**Message from the President..**



**A**gain one calendar year is going down in history. Here in the north the gold panning season is also over as the gold creeks are now covered by snow and ice. This activity period of the WGA, however, will continue until next August as it follows the dates of the World Goldpanning Championships.

The most important event of the ending calendar year naturally was the World event and regarding it the annual meeting of the WGA. It was pleasing to see again many gold panning amateurs and professionals gathering together in spite of long distances. It tells that our twenty-year-old association does not work in vain. From the small beginning it has developed into a worldwide organisation.

This year in Japan we experienced one of the best world championships ever. It was arranged with heart and proficiency. It had demanded time, money and enthusiasm - the organisers had put a lot of efforts for this very successful event. Once again, thousands of thanks to our friends in Hamatombetsu!

During the past year, I have had a chance to visit three museums showing the history of gold panning; in Sapporo - Japan, in Burgdorf - Switzerland and in Thuringen - Germany. These and many other gold museums around the world are important to our activities. They tell the history of our hobby; gold panning which dates back hundreds, even thousands of years. These buildings eclipse many times the competitions in my opinion.

The 2002/2003 period is the last for the present board. I have already announced that I will leave my work as a President to the younger ones (?). At this stage I can say that my years in WGA activities have been most interesting. During that time the role of the association has changed and now we will face the choices: shall it be only the organ which co-ordinates our assembling or shall it be the organisation which has power and drive to preserve the gold tradition and develop the possibilities of gold panning. These things among others we have had to consider when drafting the mission statement of the association.

This past year, I have also noticed one surprising thing. I have never kept the duties of the President to be top of the power tree, more like the important job to gather the knowledge and people related to gold together. In the past months, however, we have seen that the forthcoming President election has aroused a lot of discussion and even lobbying. Presidency is, actually, a value! I will wish all the best possible success to the next President of the WGA!

During the years, I have thought over the duties of the President. The discussion about this matter is going on and I would like to express some of my thoughts: In my opinion the President should come from a country where gold panning activities and respecting the traditions are strong. It would make the task easier if the President worked in the administration of gold panning of his/her own country. He/she should have the support and respect of the organisation of his/her own country. Furthermore, in my mind the President should forget the participation as a competitor at least to the World and European Goldpanning Championships. In other words the events where he/she represents the WGA (it's not correct if for example during the prize giving ceremonies the President will give the prize to him/herself. Also it helps keep impartial.) The President should try to increase the importance and respect of gold panning and gold panners. Too often people thinks that panners are the strange clowns.

With these thoughts I wish you all Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2003.

**Kauko Launonen**

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## Treasurers report..



**F**or some time now I have been keen to start the production of items of merchandise for the World Goldpanning Association as this is something we can all enjoy – and, of course, it is a new income stream for our funds! So I was really pleased to see an exciting new development happen at the World Championships in Japan – the launch of our first merchandising item! The WGA's first hatpin is well designed and beautifully made, and all credit must go to Veronika Stedra who steered the design and development of the hatpin. What next?! I would now welcome your thoughts on what items we could think about producing in the future: baseball caps, sewn badges, car stickers, T-shirts?

The sale of almost 1000 hatpins has made our good accounts even better! You will see the figures in the minutes of the WGA Council of Representatives meeting in Japan. Essentially we continue to reduce our costs, through increasing the use of electronic communication, and to gently increase our income from voting fees, bidding fees and merchandising! As treasurer I am comfortable that we are now in a steady surplus position, hence my willingness to support the development of new merchandise

and recommend that in future the WGA reimburse Board members' administration costs through an annual honorarium payment.

As we approach the time to elect a new president, I am pleased that he or she will inherit a modest, but robust cash flow and balance sheet. My thanks to all of you who have helped me, and paid your fees with a smile! My friends, we have an association to be truly proud of.

Vincent Thurkettle  
WGA Treasurer

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**Editorial.**

*As the wind blows outside and I consider Virginia, USA to be very cold, (Indeed it may drop below freezing tonight!) I started to think of Inkeri and Pirjo considerably colder, snowier and hopefully enjoying the Northern lights. In fact, when I consider all the people who have contributed to this issue of GT it is quite amazing. Some are almost in constant darkness and extreme cold temperatures, some are about to go and sunbathe as their summer starts and all are scattered on different continents or across Europe. Indeed our organization is most diverse, yet once or more a year we all meet somewhere to enjoy good company, a few beers and a song or two. The gold panning community is a gathering of quite remarkable people. In our view as editors of Golden Times the most remarkable ones are those who have sent us something to put in GT! Well done and please keep articles, information and pictures coming in.*

*Next year promises to be an interesting one with changes in presidency and changes in Golden Times. We hope the next issue of GT in the spring will include articles and discussions on the future of the WGA and GT.*

*Please have a wonderful Christmas and New Year, let's hope Santa brings you a magic goldpan, which cannot lose chips!*

*See you in Switzerland....*



*Inkeri, Paul and Pirjo*

Note: Many thanks from Golden Times to the following who provided pictures from Japan to use in GT. Fred Olsson, Cecile Thibaud, Veronika Stedra, Vince & Paul Thurkettle.

In addition to reports of the gold panning competitions, we would love to have articles on the history of gold with historical pictures, gold panning experiences, stories regarding gold, gold panning possibilities in different countries, gold panning methods, gold museums and other interesting places. Please help us to make Golden Times not just a report on the competitions but something you look forward to reading, which informs as well as entertains. Each nation has a good newsletter; please send us articles you feel the world audience would enjoy! Thank you!

**Please send Golden Times your input!!!**

Our email or mailing address are on the last page, next issue planned for April

## 16th International German Gold-Panning-Championship 2002



The winners of the 16th International German Gold-Panning-Master-Ship 2002 are steady: They are Sepp Hasslinger (men pro), Veronika Stedrá (women pro), Peter Ossenkopf (veterans), Hanna Wasiléwicz (juniors) and Sonja Zbigniew (amateurs).

From July 12th till July 14th the former mining-town Goldkronach in the Fichtelgebirge was in the field of vision for gold prospectors from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, French, Belgium, Poland, the Czech Republic and the Slovakian Republic. The German Gold-Panning Association sent the invitations.



That the event is acknowledged as a tourist highlight was substantiated by the 134 participating gold prospectors, numerous spectators and also famous visiting lecturers. During the speech about the importance of friendship around the world, the deputy district administrator Johann Feulner and the Mayor of the city Günther Hoppert, expressed appreciation for the friendly competition" as a special highlight in the annual events of the city. Special thanks were given to the earlier Mayor of the city, Günter Blechschmidt, who has been an active gold prospector for a few years and today, during his retirement gives gold panning introduction courses at Goldkronach lake.

As representative of the WGA (World Goldpanning Association), vice-president Veronika Stedrá from Prague was present all the time during the competitions. Krzysztof Maciejak another east-European

Goldprospector from the "Goldcentre Poland" transmitted his best wishes to all German Goldprospectors. As a sign for a friendship between the Polish and GermanGoldprospectors, he delivered of a deed to the DGSV. Another present came from a substitution from the Alsace, a cast iron disc showing a metalworker pouring the cast.

Because of construction in the area of the normal competition, the arrangement took place in the Dressendorf district. The villagers within the whole area made their municipal hall available for the competitions. A lot of local Goldprospectors and other local people assured of Norbert Kurz (member of the board) that the competition conditions were perfect.



All participants and visitors enjoyed all the days. Directly near the municipal hall, were

already starting from the first day, was an expanded tent town. Other people had an arrangement in hotels and homes near the fairground. For the evening entertainment it there was a gold prospector regulars'table, gold-panning-jackpot, a golddigger-party with western- and country music as well as on Saturday night a performance by western dance group "Caramella" ([www.caramella.cz](http://www.caramella.cz)). Another highlight was the Canadian triathlon (archery, log cutting and gold panning). Also this time there was no trade show, but a number of prospectors sold items.

Besides the selling of Goldpans and sluices there were all kinds of rarities , gold crystals, other minerals and technical literature. A real classic was the presentation from our WaiblingerGoldprospector Gerhard Hetzel, a specialist who has found find gold in the Rhineriver. One of his treasures which he showed was a couple of 100 grams of authentic Rhine gold. Gerhard's favorite places are gravel pits near the Rhine. He found his first Rhinegold in a gravel pit near Rastatt in 1989. In the same year, he located Rhine gold in ten other gravel pits. Now he has started a period of concentrated passion and has toured in a lot of European countries.  
**By Peter Ossenkopf**, Translated by **Manfred Seeber**



# European Championship 2002

St Yrieix La Perche, France

The Organizing Committee wants to thank the competitors for their kindness and their fairplay. We hope that they had good time in France.

We also thank the WGA Representatives who were on the site. Their opinions had been very helpfull in the competition. We wish our swiss friends good luck for 2003.

For the Organizing Committee, the President- Serge NENERT

## Final results of the official categories (the top 5)

### Skilled men

	Name	First name	Nation	Result time
1	PIZZOGLIO	Walter	I	5'03"
2	DEON	Gottardo	I	8'15"
3	BARON	Erich	A	8'58"
4	BODRATO	Rocco	I	10'47"
5	MANDRICK	Thierry	F	12'46"

### Oldtimers

	Name	First name	Nation	Result time
1	DEON	Gottardo	I	3'34"
2	BARON	Erich	A	3'47"
3	GRUBENMAN	Peter	CH	5'44"
4	GUGLER	Josef	A	6'47"
5	JANUSZ	Jean	F	8'34"

### Juniors

	Name	First name	Nation	Result time
1	JAUNAS	Chris	F	16'49"
2	QUEIPO ABAD	Cristina	E	17'16"
3	LUEDI	Felix	CH	18'52"
4	PFLIEGER	Julie	F	22'01"
5	DA ROCHA GARCIA	Adrian	E	23'08"

### Hommes Débutants :

1 : CLERGOT Laurent, France, 2 : GUYON Samuel, France, 3, SERAILLE Frédéric, France

### Femmes Débutantes :

1 : QUEIPO ABAD Silvia, Spain, BONNAIRE Emmanuelle, France, 3 : PIZZOGLIO Teresina, Italia

### Equipes open 3 :

1 : ISPRA GOLDPANNING SCHOLL , Italia, 2 : ABC D'ORO, Italia, 3 : ROLLIER et al. , Suisse

### Equipes open 5 :

1 : VICTIMULA UNO, Italia, 2 : VICTIMULA TRE, Italia, 3 : BARON / STOCKL / GUGLER, Austria

### Equipe nation 3 open

1 : ITALIA VICTIMULA, Italia, 2 : ROLLIER et al., Suisse, PUSCHEL, STROHBACH, ROLLE, Germany

### Couples:

1 : ISPRA, Italia, 2 : ANITA, Italia, 3 : SAMY, Italia

### Skilled women

	Name	First name	Nation	Result time
1	LUEDI	Marlise	CH	7'14"
2	BASTOVA	Matie	CZ	7'38"
3	STEDRA	Veronika	CZ	11'14"
4	GUILLET	Edmonde	F	14'06"
5	BARON	Ilse	A	15'14"

### NATIONAL TEAMS

	Name	Time	Flakes	Result time
1	SUISSE	31'52"	19	36'52"
2	ASTURIAS (SPAIN)	36'09"	19	41'09"
3	AUSTRIA	29'27"	17	44'27"
4	CZECH REPUBLIC	34'37"	18	44'27"
5	HOLLAND	39'12"	18	49'12"

### POUSSINS

	Name	First name	Nation	Result time
1	VILADEVALL	Anna	E	18'36"
2	PIVA	Julie	F	24'07"
3	ROBIN	Alison	F	25'58"
4	DOMINGUEZ DURANTE	Salvador	E	31'46"
5	SALIN	Paul	F	33'05"

## Goldpanning Championship of Slovak and Czech Republic, as the rehearsal for World Goldpanning Championship 2004

It is a tradition, that the national championships of Czech and Slovak republic are organised alternately on the territory of both countries. This year, the event took place on the shore of river Hron ,under the medieval castle Reviste, near Zarnovica in Middle Slovakia. Due to the extensive terrain landscaping works, the championship could take place not sooner than on August 23 - 25, shortly before the World Championship in Japan. The organisers were aware of the fact, that Hamatobetsu was too far for the purses of the Slovakian and also of the



Goldpanning in Hron river during the Championship of Czech and Slovak Republic 2002 in Revistske Podzamcie

majority of Czech goldpanners.

Totally 232 golpanners attended the championship, not only from Czech and Slovak Republics, but also from Poland, Germany, and Austria. They competed in seven categories for the individuals, three categories of teams and several free competitions. In the most prestigious competition of professionals, the most successful was Greta Kabsdorferova from Slovakia, among women, and Erik baron from Austria among men.

The event took place in the area , where the World Goldpanning Championship 2004 would be organised. It was a kind of rehearsal

Further information on World Championship in Goldpanning 2004 in Slovak Republic , to the goldpanners public will be provided, along with the application forms, during the World Championship 2003 in Switzerland.

Further information will be also provided on [www.goldprospectors.sk](http://www.goldprospectors.sk)

The detail information on program will be available to the goldpanning public during the World Goldpanning Championship 2003 in Switzerland,as well as on the internet page

<http://www.goldprospectors.sk>.



Erik Baron from Austria, winner in the men-professionals category

## Reports from the 2002 World Goldpanning Championships

### From Spain:

One more time we have had the chance to experience a World Goldpanning championship. No matter how far away, no matter when or how; what is it that makes all goldpanners save their money and travel long distances year after year? One common aim; to participate in the championship. Such is the passion for gold panning, distance just won't hold them back or stop them from meeting up with old friends.

This time the championship took us to Japan, an exotic country with no less exotic people. The breathtaking beauty of Hokkaido instantly captured us; it is the north most island of Japan and also the less populated. Its capital: Sapporo. Our amazement grew even bigger when, after being taken to the competition area, we could see the marvellous landscape surrounding the location. The competition area was situated next to the Japanese lake Kutcharo in Hamatombetsu, north of Hokkaido. It was perfectly located, arranged and organised; every single detail had been taken into account. It constituted an excellent venue for the championship, very appropriate for the campsite as well as for the different activities.

The competition place itself consisted of pools arranged in two parallel rows, allowing a number of thirty participants in each round. Observers could witness every detail of the competition and cheer up participants from a privileged position facing the pools. Behind the pools was the tower, which served to speak out the instructions of the championship. The inspiring lake was always at the background.

Very soon we started to see some familiar faces and also make new friends all the time. It is surprising the number of people you are able to meet in events like this. People from all over the world, with the most varied culture, traditions and professions, but with a common interest: gold.

After completing registration we were taken to Hamatombetsu Primary School where the nine students of the school welcomed us to the town playing musical instruments. Such a sweet surprise could only set a happy mood as preparation for the rest of the activities. Following that, we had the chance to

participate in an "induction course" on the use of the "yurita" (Japanese wooden pan). The more skilful ones got it quickly, others had to struggle a bit longer; however difficult, nothing could bring more fun to the panners.

After the fun, a bit of delicious Japanese food to get the strength back, followed by a lecture on Japanese gold history and traditions by the President of the Japanese Goldpanning Association.

Time was already going very quickly and soon the next day would witness the official opening ceremony of the championship. All the participants cheerfully gathered in Hamatombetsu ready for the parade, which would lead us to the competition place. Fortunately, the enthusiasm and joy triumphed over the heavy falling rain. We made our way to the big tent through the streets of Hamatombetsu. Once there, we could enjoy unique traditional Japanese performances, some food and, above all, a very friendly and cheerful atmosphere. The championship had officially started.

The following morning we could share in the enthusiasm and happiness of participants as rounds went by. The timetable allowed us as well some free time to enjoy and experience some traditional Japanese activities such as the tea ceremony, quick instruction on flower arrangement, Japanese writing, paper folding techniques and even Japanese dancing.

Rounds and days developed smoothly, and quickly! Time seems to fly when you are having fun. Much sooner than we expected the end of the competition had arrived. With tears in our eyes we had to say goodbye to Japan and all our friends, old and new. Luckily we departed with the hope of meeting again soon in another championship.

Now back home I can only say thank you to the Japanese organization and everybody involved in the championship for their hospitality, their help and effort. It was an experience we will never forget. Likewise, thank you to all the participants, all the friends, for showing once more your friendship. Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Ana Maria Santiago Menendez (Spain)



**From the UK** by Barbra Copley

Having missed Australia in 2001 I was determine to get to Japan this year, my daughter Dawn said she would like to take the two children, Michael (14yrs) had been to America a few times but Alison (6yrs) has



never been out of the country. Dawn thought it would be good for them to see a completely different culture, her partner Ian was not particularly interested but when we started booking our flights etc he decided to join us - Dawn said

the trip, that's what bothered him the 14 hours flying plus the rest of the traveling just to get to Hamatombetsu, and when we get there what's there? Like many who traveled to this years event it would be along journey, we left home at 4am Thursday 22 August and arrived 10pm Saturday 24 August, ok so we had one overnight in Tokyo.

As I am the only goldpanner amongst us it was decided we would fly to Sapporo then hire a car and take the scenic drive to Hamatombetsu, this way we would see a little of Hokkaido. Also if they got fed up watching goldpanning they could take off in the car and amuse themselves, after all the coast was nearby and all that beautiful open space.

We all joined in the parade - never let it be said it only rains heavy in Scotland - yes I know it goes side ways there - but in Japan there was just so much of it and all at once, my boots filled up and it took three days to dry out. However the next day the sun came out and it was glorious for the rest of the week.

I spent most of the week prior to our trip trying to persuade the family to take part in the beginners, juniors or even a team eventually I gave up. However I entered Alison and myself in the novelty event thinking she could do any running and I would do the panning, not so.

First I had to lift a beer bottle on a nail and string fishing line and carry it to the panning



area - not as easy as it sounds. Next with your mouth find a ball from the flour tub with a number on it, then gasping for

breath and face covered in flour pick up your numbered bucket of sand and a box which contained your panning equipment - all were different - ours was a sort of loading shovel. Alison had never held a pan until that moment so I just had to talk her through it and amazingly she found two pieces - the spectators enjoyed the event enormously, and Ian enjoyed the beers we won for him.

Eventually we persuaded Dawn have a go in the ladies beginners, we all said it would be good practice for our team event - although I don't think it had the desired effect we'd hoped for. She did enjoy the experience and came a respectable 6th - well done Dawn.

Michael finally got interested and took part in the juniors and much to his and our amazement came 4th, he has promised me he will be taking part at Wanlockhead next year, watch out Jack.

The last day of competitions came round very quickly and we satisfied ourselves that all our small group from Britain had at least got through to the finals. Ok so no medals - we will just have to try harder next year.

We were camped near the competition site so most facilities were close by, we explored the local shops and tried all sorts of different food - it took us a while to find bread that was not sweet or baps not stuffed with fish or sweet sauces (we wanted plain bread to make sandwiches). We tried caramelized shrimps and squid and some little fish with eyes looking up at us, plus many other fish and meat dishes, however we could not get used to the cold tea and coffee, luckily we took a few tea bags and with the loan of a gas cooker we managed to produce a few hot drinks usually first thing in a morning. On the site we could choose Japanese - various noodle dishes, or European - hot dogs, fish & chips, beef sandwiches etc. But the most delicious thing we found were cream cakes from a shop on

the high street - by the end of the week we knew the whole family who ran it.

Driving was a pleasure, ok so we didn't have to drive on the wrong side. The road works puzzled us a bit, first we saw the man waving a yellow flag as we slowed down we saw another man a few yards away with a red or white flag for stop or go, no traffic lights. On main road signs were in Japanese and English however in towns and villages the signs were all in Japanese, so then it was a matter of heading north or south and hoping for the best, meanwhile we saw some lovely little places. The speed limit seemed a bit slow at first but then unless you are on the expressway 60km is ideal for sightseeing, I would almost say it was a pleasure driving apart from the two hours we spent trying to get out of Sapporo on arrival. On our return to the airport at Chitose we approached the city from the other side through some beautiful countryside and missed Sapporo altogether, great navigating Dawn well done.

At the start of the week we had been invited to a BBQ at a house in town - we sat around a sort of pit with the fire in front of us, I've never seen so much food - it just kept appearing. We visited the local school and were entertained by the children. We did some panning in the rivers and managed to retrieve a little Japanese gold. We spent time in the shops in Hamotombetsu, we were amazed to see so much time and effort spent on individually packaging and presentation. We drove down the coast and saw still very busy fishing harbours. We looked at farms - quite small in comparison to ours back home in Shropshire - still milking cows by hand, growing cereals and vegetables etc, there were a few tractors and small machinery about. We had a go at Japanese flower arranging, those ladies made it look so easy. We were introduced to the art of the Japanese tea ceremony, first the demonstration and the tasting of green tea then we had a go at making it ourselves. We spent a night on Japanese beds in a house in town and were treated to English breakfast Japanese style, very yummy. We were expertly shown how to fit and wear the Kimono and later presented with one to bring back home. Origami was another thing that looks easy but when put to the test is not quite so easy, but we tried. We also tried calligraphy - the art of Japanese brush work, again looks easy.

Local children came after school to practice their English, each one had written sentences to ask us and we hoped they understood the answers, by the end of the week we had gathered a few e-mail addresses and hopefully we will help them along. The language was no real barrier, with odd words and hand movements we managed to get by and anyway the translators were always on hand to help us out when things got really technical - thanks to all those volunteers they did a great job.

On Friday evening there was a beef BBQ which was followed by Japanese style entertainment. First the drummers played, then the carrying of the shrine ceremony followed by more drumming and then the Dom dance started, groups of people kept appearing in all manner of strange and wonderful costumes and started to dance in a sort of spiral, the drums got louder and as they did the dancers encouraged the spectators to join in. And join in they did with much enthusiasm, this went on for a couple of hours by which time we were all shattered. The evening ended with a magnificent firework display like we have never seen before.

At the end of the week our new friends took us to a real tea ceremony in a house in town, we all knelt on the floor as is customary whilst the host made tea and explained the setting, why everything was laid out as it was, to create a feeling of peace, relaxation and enjoyment. The reasons for each movement - the folding of the cloth, the turning of the bowl etc - it turned out to be Satoshi's 50th birthday that day so we all had cake as well, what a treat. This little friendly gathering of friends so impressed us that we will remember it always.

What an experience, such warm and friendly people who opened up their homes and hearts to us all, who came out in the pouring rain to see us parade, who came to cheer us on in the competition - from one end of Hamotombetsu to the other they all made us feel really welcome. Would we go back again - well of course, we are all agreed (even Ian) that in spite of the time and cost in getting there we would all dearly love to explore more of your beautiful island and who knows maybe one day we will return to Hamotombetsu. If you didn't make it you missed a real treat.

**From Czech Rep.  
Surprises And Contrasts of Japan**  
by Veronika Stedra



I spent 16 days between Prague, Vienna, Tokyo, Sapporo, Wakkanai, and Hamatombetsu in late August. It was a real highlight of the year not only for me, but also for all the four Czech participants of the World Championships 2002. Thank you, Japanese friends, for your invitation. I am sorry the visit was so short, it would be great to recognise more of your complex culture and country. There is a report describing all the important contributions and improvements of organisation that substantially elevated the standards of our top world events, written by Mike et al. I believe that many participants will describe their personal experience from Japan in different media, nevertheless, I would like to mention just few personal moments picked up from the mixture of flashes from the journey, written in bold in my memory.

**Piece of geology: Moods of Elements**

We left Prague and Bohemia in the most difficult time of our era – full of mud and dirt after the 500year flood, having left the country along major rivers and neighbouring lowlands paralysed in all vital activities. A few days later I faced the consequences of another natural disaster, this time originating deep below the Earth's surface on the other side of the Globe. We hiked to the spa town of Toya on the bank of wonderful caldera Toya Lake in the southern Hokkaidó. Upper part of the township was smashed away by massive volcanic ash and mudflow and by natural missiles – volcanic bombs and lapilli – just two years ago. I climbed up on the edge of one of the parasitic cinder cone crater on the slope of volcano above the town. Mt. Usu is one of 24 active volcanoes of the Japanese island chain; it breaths through numerous small craters and vents thus sending sulphur-

rich smoke with water steam on the surface and to the air, and provides the town with permanent hot springs. On the other side – sad and quiet are the relicts of houses, walls, gardens and plants touched by hot and quick ash avalanche, as I saw at upper Toya. A lack of our respect to natural elements leads to huge losses of human property and lives in both countries. Once we experienced it face to face in Bohemia, now can understand better how patient, sophisticated and tough Japanese people must be to rise again and reconstruct their country, repeatedly affected by destructive earthquakes, tsunami and volcanic eruptions.

**The perfect railway system? More than that...**

A striking experience was to get off the train at the wrong station near Hakodate late in the evening. Using the advantage of the Japan Rail Pass, we travelled from Tokyo to Sapporo in one day without any troubles, just enjoying the alternating country views from our comfortable seats and time by time changing expresses. At the last moment we unfortunately made a mistake in the time of arrival of our limited express, relied only on our timetable and joined the crowd. We realised what was on when the train was far-gone, the crowd left us alone in a small station, far smaller than what we expected. We appeared in a small empty railway crossing just few kilometres from its main terminal. The last express does not stop here. No english-speaking local, only strictly looking head of the station. To Sapporo? Nei. No train today. Two funny looking foreigners, heavy loaded by rucksacks and numerous pieces of hand luggage, forgotten and hopeless.

The Japanese guy in charge told us to wait, got the telephone and talked for a while. In less than ten minutes he lead us to the platform, and poured thus a new hope to our depressed minds. Our last and almost missed super express stopped by us in next 20 seconds and without any delays or comments took us unexpectedly to our correct destination. Miracle? Probably, with cooperation with extremely open mind, professionalism, responsibility and good will of our nameless hosts. We could not believe our senses. What we could was to compare rigid, old, and dirty and always delayed „fast” trains in our country that would never stop to pick up anybody from a place out of the scheduled stations under any circumstances.

**Contrasts of traveller's life**

We spent 6 days and nights wild travelling by plane and trains without any basic comfort, totally homeless, but happy we could go for such a journey at all. Our main task was to catch as much raw experience from the new and for us very remote country and its every day life. We travelled directly to Wakkanai, left our heavy load, and in 4 days made a loop around Hokkaido to be back in the north just at the beginning of the Golden Week. When we reached the northernmost coast of Hokkaido again, we were met by our hosts from Hamatombetsu and some of our best friends – Vince and Mike – at the Wakkanai airport. It was the breaking point, and since this moment everything has gone like a dream, with thermal bath, hotel, fully equipped and free campground, complete services, lovely varied programme, and smooth and nice competition, framed by volcanic mountain chain beyond the Swan Lake. I was really sad that there were so few Czechs, and so few musical instruments with us...



**Want another extra programme? No problem ...**

At the very beginning of the Golden Week it was proposed by one of our friendly hosts, Ueno from Chitose, to make a short final trip along the Ochotsk Sea coast as soon as the event is over. So we did. In the bright morning, when the event was over and almost all the people disappeared, the two of us set out for sightseeing along the coast, the

fishing port Esashi, and then looking for gold and platinum along rivers hidden in the forested hills around. One of our options was to visit the Okhotsk Museum at Esashi, famous for its historical and natural exhibitions. This option became quite



attractive namely with respect to dense rain pouring on from grey clouds which were for some reason hanging just above us. It was Monday, and the brick building of the Museum was naturally closed. However, everything was possible here in the Far East, and so we dared to knock on the door of the local town hall at Esashi after we enjoyed lovely fish noodle soup in local restaurant. Ueno asked for the favour, and to my surprise, stones started to roll again. The cheerful guy sat in the car, drove along with us back to the museum, unlocked the safety system, opened the door, illuminated all the chambers, and showed us the entire exhibition.

*There were several moments like this one, and they really did break cultural barriers and language difficulties. Hope this short contribution illustrates at least partially my feelings about the far eastern country, Japan, and its great attitude to guests. If only similar experiences were reported by visitors of my country!*

**Veronika.**

**From USA:  
By Paul Thurkettle**

Where am I?

As I ducked out of the big tent, I heard Gerry's voice over the intercom calling names to the next event. As Hideko's voice translated Gerry into Japanese I quickly remembered I was not in Australia, but up in the very northern end of Japan.

When the President of the All Japan Goldpanning Association told us during a good meal in Australia "If you come to Japan, we will look after you" little did we know how well that statement would be lived up to.

Travelling from the eastern side of the United States, some 22 hours later I arrived in Tokyo and moved to the national airport to fly up to Hamatombetsu. At the airport I nervously looked around for other goldpanners, am I on the right flight to the right place? As the only westerner there as the gate opened I became more concerned, then a representative of the Government tourism agency approached me "You come to goldpan? I must have stood out a mile, the only westerner, wearing a funny hat. Once assured we travelled up to Wakkanai and to my relief met our organizers clutching "Welcome" signs.



**Cecile and Mike watch buck wheat noodles made**



Somehow my brother Vincent and Mike Gossage sitting in the restaurant looking out at the runway missed a 737 aircraft pull up right under their noses! Once teamed up we travelled in the coaches to Hamatombetsu and the championships!

The site setup was superb with a workforce that any country hosting the championships would dream of. Their jackets were colour coded depicting translators, officials and staff. As soon as an event was completed it would be cleaned and prepared for the next. At night a whole team rushed in cleaning, emptying the troughs and preparing for the next day. The competition went well with the excellent site plan paying off as protests were kept to a minimum, the spotters and timers did a good job and results were published quickly. Unfortunately the number of attendees was down on a typical world championship probably

due to the expense of getting there and immediately following Australia. I'm sure our hosts were disappointed as the gold week went by and the number of people arriving dropped off quickly. Still with over 200 from over 15 nations it was still a World Class Event.



**Local School children put on a show**



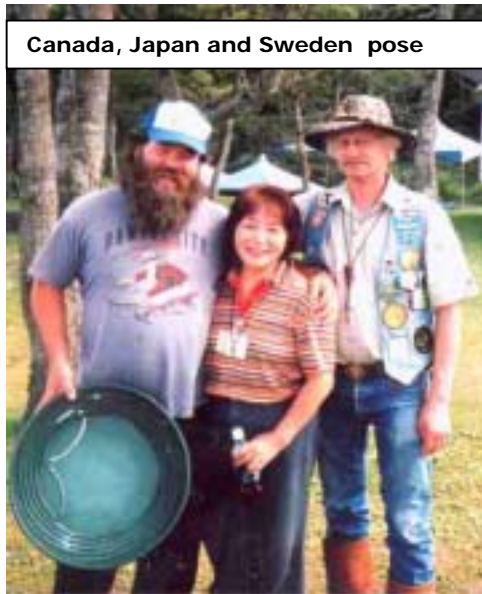
Hamatombetsu is a remote town that rarely sees western tourists and this was apparent in the enthusiasm in which we were greeted. The gold week started with a traditional Japanese barbeque held in a house where the centre of the room is one large barbeque pit. The food was excellent and plentiful and the company good. Both day trips planned went well with visits to a local school and to a Buck-Wheat noodle factory as well as panning in the local rivers. At each site the hospitality was excellent with lunch served and fun events planned. Better still all found gold in the rivers and also had the fun of watching Veronika brave the cold waters and rapids to search for a glory hole!

The large tent at the competition area hosted food stalls and beer and all the evening events. My staple diet of fish and chips at 100Yen a go was excellent value and must have been subsidised by the organisers. Each night something was going on for entertainment and I will

never forget the drummers. The primal beat of the drums and the drummers' synchronisation and movements were fantastic. Each day of the competition different events were planned from traditional Japanese handwriting to green tea preparation and ceremony. On the Friday night we were the guests of honour at a festival where we chanted and danced the swan dance for hours around a totem pole. This was followed by one of the best fireworks shows I have ever seen.

At all times the local people regarded us, as friends and I cannot help think a little strangely. If we were the first westerners they have seen closely I hope we gave a good impression.

I think this world championship is one of the first I have



Canada, Japan and Sweden pose

been to where the country's Government took such a major interest both in financial support and organisation. Any national goldpanning organisation that follows will have a hard time to equal or beat this one in terms of sponsorship and staff and unless they have the budget and national support available to them they should not even attempt to. We will remember this one fondly but we must not forget how much money was spent on it. I hope the town does not go cold this winter, as they have spent their entire budget on us! Regardless of the cost the organisation in co-ordinating the staff and event was flawless.

The friends made and families that opened up and became good friends with our families will not be forgotten. The gifts that were showered upon competitors almost became overpowering. The medal giving and closing ceremony as Japan handed over to Switzerland was not well attended and I feel as had happened at other worlds is overlooked in the planning stages. A good podium, time for presentations and picture taking must be considered. The final day schedule should allow time for the prize giving to happen before it is dark and everyone has left!

I have now tried POCARI Sweat, SAKI and some strange things I cannot name. Joined in communal hot baths with a very small towel. My memory is rich in seeing another part of our world so different from mine. **Thank you Japan!**

The goldpanners caught Mr Takashi Suga with a surprise birthday party for him.



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**From Australia:**

We were "blown away" with the wonderful generosity and hospitality shown by the entire Japanese organization and the township of Hamatombetsu.

We would like to give particular recognition to the significant role played by all those who worked so tirelessly behind the scenes to produce the wonderful cultural experience and brilliant championships we all enjoyed.

Words cannot adequately describe the experience of a lifetime we shared with our ever-increasing circle of golden friends.

Kind regards

Fred and Gloria

## 2002 World Goldpanning Championships in Pictures



*Camping by Lake Kutcharo*



*The very wet parade -*



The magnificent Taiko drummers and then we had a no!





Competition site



BANZAI !!!



A traditional Japanese tea party and music



BANZAI !!!



Preparing for an event





Visit to the Usotan Gold Park



Yuri-ita training



Art of Ikebana



Swiss Party Night



Vince & Mike learning Japanese



2 beautiful Geishas



Japanese Cowboys

## 2002 World Goldpanning Champions

### Skilled Ladies - Final



- 1- Lea Rekila - Sweden
- 2- Ulla Kalander Karlsson - Sweden
- 3- Leila Menna - Finland

### Skilled Men - Final

- 1- Ken Karlsson - Sweden
- 2- Antti Seppala - Finland
- 3- Raimo Repola - Finland



### National Teams - Final



- 1- Sweden
- 2- Finland
- 3- Japan

**REPORT BY THE RULES COMMITTEE ON THE WORLD GOLDFANNING  
CHAMPIONSHIPS HELD IN HAMATOMBETSU, JAPAN. 2002**

1. The championships were held during the period 26<sup>th</sup> of August to the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2002.
2. The championships were held by the edge of a Lake on the outskirts of the town of Hamatombetsu. Hamatombetsu is at the north end of the island of Hokkaido and just by its geographical position it was a difficult place to get to.
3. The Japanese delegation that came to the previous world championships (2001, 2000, 1999) had produced many leaflets and handouts with lots of good information and they made many promises to the world's goldpanners about the championships they were hosting.
4. There were three ways to get to and from Hamatombetsu, once inside Japan, the first was to drive (aprox 5 hrs) from Sapporo and this was done by at least three groups, the second was to fly to Wakkaani and then take the coach that was provided free by the organisers and the third way was the train and free coach, which was used by some panners. Which ever way was travelled all reported no difficulty with the arrangements (except for Koos from Holland due to delays by British Airways!!)
5. On arrival at the panning site panners were met and warmly greeted by our Japanese hosts.
6. One of the promises made by our hosts was that all panners who wanted to camp could do so for free with bedding included. This promise was met totally with a variety of tents being available next to the panning area. Showers and toilets were provided in that area as well (It was nice to see Western style toilets).
7. The competition area was a man made area, just off the Lake. The panning pools were raised off the ground in two rows of 15 pools each. A spectator area was provided which was banked so that all the panners could be seen.
8. The layout of the competition site had been well thought out with easy access to the pools through an archway and large areas for bibbing and for the judges to count the gold flakes.
9. Seeding of the buckets was done under the strictest standards with gold being in small plastic bags and not tubes. This meant that no gold would be left in a tube. Each plastic bag was opened and the contents shook out and counted on a flat surface. The bag was then checked to ensure that it was empty and placed in a container. A second person then made a number of holes in the bucket all at the same depth and the same number as gold flakes being used. The first person then counted and placed one piece at a time in each hole. The bucket was then shook to close the holes. The second person then checked the plastic bags again to ensure that they were empty and then they were removed and the bucket placed in another area. It sounds a long method, but in practice it was quite quick. For the second year running finding extra gold has not been a problem due to the size of the gold (larger than we use in Europe) and the work done by the organisers in ensuring that they are not responsible for seeding extra gold. Well done Japan and Australia.
10. The program for the week was well presented with tours to a local school for a music performance and a visit to a noodle factory. There was of course the chance to prospect and obtain a sample of Japanese gold. All excursions were free and included lunch, this was very much appreciated by all the competitors.
11. Activities at the competition site during the week were well organised and the arrangements for food and entertainment were excellent, (except for the Mosquitoes!).

The program of entertainment was very varied and the centrepiece was the swan dance that lasted well over an hour and was danced by everybody. Following this was a fantastic firework display that was the best I have ever seen. All activities were free, as was the rain that came down in sheets during the International Parade that was from the centre of Hamatombetsu to the competition area.

12. The competition was held in an atmosphere of friendship and good will and the finishing term of "Banzai" will be remembered by all.
13. During the competition we had one verbal complaint from one competitor who complained that it was unfair to run the competition pools in two banks of 15. The complaint was that the partners or friends of pools 1 to 15 were able to give signals in whatever form to the panners but that the partners or friends of pools 16 to 30 were not able to because the other side was out of bounds so as not to obstruct the judges. There have been a number of competitions that have not had a straight 30 pools and this is the first time that this has been raised. One could argue that it is unfair if your partner or friend gives you any verbal help and that other panners who do not have partners or friends there get no help. Clearly the rules have NOT been broken with the layout and we see no reason to challenge them.
14. Two other instances of note need to be brought to your attention. There were two disqualifications during the competition. The first disqualification was a panner from Australia who entered the beginners who was clearly not a beginner and had panned in a previous world championship and secondly the same panner entered the Veterans when he was not sixty years old. I believe that this panner knew on both occasions that what he was doing was against our rules. I am happy that justice was done by disqualifying him twice and I would like to thank the fair and honest Australians who in the spirit of fair play let me know what was going on.
15. These instances do raise some points, people want to compete in the beginners because it carries some sort of prestige and glory, when in truth it should be nothing more than a first go for spectators costing very little and giving in prizes, very little. Both male and female beginners could be run at the same time. The time saved may allow for an officially recognised 3-person National team competition. This may help those who cannot raise five people. The second point it raised could cover two areas, firstly who can compete for a National team and who can compete in the Veterans. If at registration competitors for these two events had to produce their passports then the date of birth could be checked for all entrants to the Veterans and proof of Nationality would be available for competitors chosen for National teams.
16. Assessing the whole week we think this championship was a rounding success and our sincere thanks should go to the Japanese organising committee and to the people of Hamatombetsu for their warmth, their hospitality, their friendliness and for organising a really professional championship.
17. Your standards will be a model for others to follow. Well done Japan and Sianara until we meet again.

#### **Rules Committee October 2002**

**WORLD GOLDPANNING ASSOCIATION  
2002 Annual Meeting -**

Time: Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2002, at 6.20 - 8.20 p.m.

Place: Waterfowl Observation Palace, Hamatombetsu, Hokkaido, Japan

Present: 27 official representatives from 15 member countries (Appendix 1)

**1 - Opening of the meeting**

-Mr. Kauko Launonen, President of the World Goldpanning Association, opened the meeting by welcoming the members who were present.

**2 - Confirmation of the chairman and the secretary of the meeting**

-According to the rules, Kauko Launonen took the chair; Inkeri Syrjänen acted as secretary.

**3- Verification of legality and authority of the meeting**

- The legality and the authority of the meeting were approved. The invitation to attend the meeting was sent out on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2002.

**4 –Noting of attending members**

- 27 official representatives from 16 member countries.

**5- The Annual Report 2001/2002**

- The annual report covering the period from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2001 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2002 was read by Kauko Launonen and approved by the meeting.

The Italian representative, Mr. Luca Pasqualini of Federazione Italiana Cercatori d'oro, proposed that the annual meeting should vote for only one representative association from Italy to the WGA . After discussion it was stated that the WGA has given the right to represent Italy to two goldpanning associations, since they were not able to co-operate. That is all the WGA is able to do with the matter at the present time.

**6 - The Accounts for 2001/2002**

- Treasurer of the WGA, Mr Vincent Thurkettle, read the accounts: USD 270 has been used to cover the expenses of publishing and distributing the WGA's newsletter, "Golden Times". The income of the fiscal year is composed of membership fees and application fees, totalling to USD 1560. In addition to that, the surplus of the previous year is USD 1752. The closing balance is USD 3042. The accounts were accepted by the meeting .

Vice-President of the WGA, Mrs. Veronika Stedra, introduced the new pins of the WGA. The pins will be sold to the member associations at the price of USD 2. The board recommended USD 3 as a guiding retail price.

**7 - Membership fees for the current period**

- Membership fees for the coming year will remain unchanged; that is, USD 25 per vote, with a minimum of USD 50 and a maximum of USD 125. The fee is determined as follows; each nation has two votes (provided two delegates attend the meeting) and in addition, each nation has one vote for every twenty competitors in the two previous world championships. There is a limit of five votes in total.

**8 - The budget for the current fiscal year**

-The Treasurer of WGA, Mr Vincent Thurkettle, introduced the budget. The available funds currently total to around USD 5500 (includes the annual fees paid just before the beginning of the meeting). The expenses of the year will be mainly composed of the publication of Golden Times, maintaining the web site of the association and some other possible targets.

**9- New applications for organising the World Goldpanning Championships in 2006**

-There were no applications to host the World Goldpanning Championships in 2006. It was stated that at the next annual meeting in 2003 in Switzerland the meeting will decide the host countries for the world event in 2006 and 2007. Kauko Launonen hoped that member

countries would send the full application well beforehand. Canada announced that they are going to apply for the Championships.

### **10 - The new applications for organising the European Goldpanning Championships in 2005**

- Spain and Poland submitted their applications to host the European Goldpanning Championships in 2005. After discussion, the voting results were as follows; Spain 45 and Poland 6. The chairman declared that Spain will host the European Goldpanning Championships in 2005.

The representative of Canada, Mr. David Millar, asked why the WGA decides the host country of the European Goldpanning Championships. He was concerned that the WGA are promoting a European Championship, when in fact the WGA should be giving full support to that year's World Championship. He also emphasised the problem that a good European Championship is certain to reduce the number of competitors attending a World Championship in the same year. Veronika Stedra outlined the history of the European event and explained that it was started many years ago to provide a major event for those people who were not able to afford long distance travel, but the WGA has always promoted the World event as the primary competition. In discussion the meeting agreed that European Championships don't decrease the number of competitors to, or lessen the value of, the world event.

### **11 - Any other business**

#### **a) Competition rules**

Mike Gossage chairman of the Rules Committee introduced the new proposals, The following points were accepted for the next three years:

- Verification
- The Jury

Also it was accepted that there will be no change to the rule governing who can pan. Mike asked that any comments on the other points raised should be sent to him over the next two months.

It was stated that in Rauris, Austria in 1994 the members for the Rule Committee were decided to be as follows: Mike Gossage, Vincent Thurkettle, Ken Karlsson, Cecile Thibaud and Koos Schoenmaker. Mike said that he has received comments from several other people as well.

#### **b) Association Rules**

Kauko Launonen said that he has been preparing the proposal for the rules of WGA. The board has given comments on the proposal and it will be sent to the member countries for further discussion before end of the year.

#### **c) Restitutions**

It was decided by the meeting that the WGA will pay an annual USD 100/person to the board members; Kauko Launonen, Inkeri Syrjänen, Vincent Thurkettle, and Veronika Stedra, and also to Mike Gossage (rules committee) and Paul Thurkettle (Golden Times) as a restitution of expenses caused in working for the WGA.

#### **d) Team Competition 2002**

This year there were several member countries who didn't have enough competitors in order to form the National Team as it is demanded in the rules. Gloria Olsson of Australia suggested that this year the meeting should give a special permission for those countries to participate in the National Team Competition with fewer competitors and some of them would pan twice. After discussion it was decided that those member countries will be allowed to participate unofficially in the category, but will be disqualified right after the competition since one could not act against the accepted rules.

#### **e) Golden Times**

Paul Thurkettle, the editor of Golden Times, distributed a questionnaire to the representatives regarding Golden Times. He asked representatives to complete it and return the form to him. Also he mentioned that editors are sorry that Italian Championships organised by Federazione Italiana Cercatori d'oro were not listed in the Golden Times for some unknown reason.

**f) Welcome to Switzerland**

The representative of Switzerland, Mr Friedrich Grundbacher, took the floor and wished everyone welcome to the World Goldpanning Championships of 2003 in Willisau.

**12 - Closing of the meeting**

Chairman Launonen closed the meeting and thanked all the participants and especially Japan for all the excellent arrangements.

Kauko Launonen  
Chairman

Inkeri Syrjänen  
Secretary



***Congratulations to Spain***



***Switzerland pay their dues***



***WGA Executive Members***

**Official representatives at the meeting:**

Fred Olsson	Australia
Gloria Olsson	Australia
David Millar	Canada
Dan Moore	Canada
Veronika Stedra	Czech Rep.
Cecile Thibaud	France
Kauko Launonen	Finland
Inkeri Syrjänen	Finland
Wolfgang Kaufmann	Germany
Barbara Copley	Great Britain
Mick Gossage	Great Britain
Luca Pasqualini	Italy
Tadao Hirose	Japan
Teruo Terazawa	Japan
Herma de Kreek	Netherlands
Koos Schoenmaker	Netherlands
Jozef Zatwardnichi	Poland
Lech Wranwski	Poland
Christine Rowe	South Africa
Obed Mashego	South Africa
Manolo García Linares	Spain
Ana María Santiago	Spain
Anneli Bergström	Sweden
Sten Bergström	Sweden
Jeannine Grundbacher	Switzerland
Friedrich Grundbacher	Switzerland
Paul Thurkettle	USA
Steve Ballati	USA

**The member countries of the World Goldpanning Association:**

- Australia (Australian Goldpanning Association/President Fred Olsson)
- Austria (Goldwäscherverein Österreich/ President Sepp Haslinger)
- Belgium (Mr. Bruno van Eerdenbrugh)

- Canada (Klondike Visitors Association/Mr. Akio Saito)
- Czech Republic (The Czech Association of Gold Prospectors/ President Veronika Stedra)
- Finland (Finnish Goldpanning Association/President Kauko Launonen)
- France (Federation Francaise D'Orpillage/President Nenert Serge)
- Germany (Deutsche Goldsuchervereinigung/President Norbert Kurtz)
- Great Britain (British Goldpanning Association/President Barbara Copley)
- Italy (Federazione Italiana Cercatori d'Oro AND Associazione Biellese Cercatori d'Oro/President Arturo Ramella)
- Japan (All Japan Goldpanning Association/President Hiroshi Nishimoto)
- The Netherlands (Mr. Koos Schoenmaker)
- Poland (The Polish Guild of Gold prospectors/President Jan Kusek)
- Slovak Republic (Slovak Goldpanning Association/ Vice-President Richard Kana II)
- Sweden (Svenska Guldvaskarföreningen/President Sten Bergström)
- Spain (Asociacion de Bateadores de Oro "Barciaecus")
- Switzerland (Swiss Goldpanning Association/President Friedrich Grundbacher)
- South Africa (South African Gold Panning Association/Chairperson Christine Rowe)
- USA (United States Gold Panning Association).



### **Even the tiny bits are valuable**

**Rob Chapman** describes how the study of tiny particles of alluvial gold can aid our understanding of the origins and nature of alluvial gold.

Many of us spend long winter hours working out where we are going to prospect our favourite territories in the following spring. We draw on our detailed memories of the configurations of the river, refer to photographs and develop cast iron cases for the exact location of our first excavation. We may pour over maps, working out prospecting strategies in new area, all with the view to discovering our own private bonanza. These methods of the committed amateur prospector have much in common with their professional counterpart. Both rely of evidence collected in the field either by themselves or others to develop hypotheses, which form the basis for further exploration. The main difference is that the exploration geologist is concerned with discovering the bedrock source of the alluvial gold rather than identifying likely holes in the riverbed. As amateurs, we may use some sources of information in common with the professionals, however we are seldom in a position to speculate on the bedrock origins of the gold we find, which is not surprising because in many cases this information has also eluded the professionals.

In fact all those tiny bits of gold that we pan can yield a wealth of information on the nature of the original gold mineralization. Research undertaken at the University of Leeds and by the British Geological Survey has shown that the chemical characteristics of alluvial gold grains can be used to yield information about their bedrock source. The idea of using the silver and perhaps copper and mercury content of gold to link alluvial gold to bedrock source is nothing new, but it is also limited because in some cases the silver concentration can change substantially throughout a single mineralised system. However, the association of gold with other minerals is often specific to the geological origins of the mineralization, but the other minerals are usually chemically and/or mechanically unstable in river sediments, and may be impossible to find.

Fortunately for the exploration geologist these minerals are frequently found entombed within alluvial gold grains. The gold has acted as an inert barrier and they survive as a relic of the mineralogy of the original gold-bearing mineralization. We can identify the minerals by making polished sections of the gold grains and analysing the inclusions using a scanning electron microscope. The resulting inclusion assemblage reflects the original mineralisation, and this characterisation is then further refined by the addition of the quantitative data defining the amounts of silver copper, mercury and in some cases palladium that are present. We are then in a position to speculate on the original geological environment of the alluvial gold, even if we have no idea where this may be.

When prospecting new areas this information can be useful in identifying the potential geological environments of the gold, which may be a lot easier than finding a small mineralized vein. But the technique can also show if gold from more than one source is present in a population of alluvial gold grains or whether the gold in two adjacent valleys are from the same type of gold mineralization.

The technique has provided much new knowledge about the nature of gold mineralization in Great Britain and Ireland, around eight thousand gold grains from about two hundred and fifty localities have been analysed. This process would not have been possible without using the field techniques developed by amateur prospectors to maximise their rewards, and in many cases we are indebted to prospectors for donating their time, (and gold) to the research work.

The research findings will be of interest to amateur prospectors not only because of the detailed records of gold localities, but because in some cases we can offer explanations on the variation in size of the gold in a specific region. The research process and findings are discussed in courses run by The University of Leeds which are open to adult students from both Great Britain and overseas.

You can find more information on this research process, an overview of the history of extraction of gold in Britain, details of Leeds University courses and a bibliography of appropriate scientific literature at [www.leeds.ac.uk/sce/gold](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/sce/gold)

**Rob Chapman teaches for the University of Leeds in the Schools of Continuing Education and Earth Sciences. When he can't go panning he gets fed up.**

## Two Gold Museums from Middle Europe By Inkeri Syrjänen

Switzerland is well known for its luxury watches, excellent cheeses and the Alps. Few know that there are also mediaeval castles and the country has some two thousand years history of gold, which continues nowadays.

**The Gold Museum in Switzerland, 'Helvetisches Goldmuseum'** locates in the western part of the country in the town and castle of Burgdorf. The castle was built in the



12<sup>th</sup> century and nowadays there are three museums. The museum of castles tells about

the history of the area and town, to the ethnological museum, which has gathered items and objects from distant people, like folk instruments of Indian and African tribes, which you are allowed to try. The Gold Museum is set up on the two floors. The room downstairs demonstrates the birth of gold and the forming of gold bearing deposits. It displays the gold mines of Switzerland. The mine 'Goldo' started to operate in the 1660s and the ruins of the mine can still be seen. Some other mines in the Alps are mentioned as well, like 'Calanda', 'Salante' and 'Astano'. Finally the visitors are told about modern days activities and that gold can be washed in many creeks and river valleys. One of the well known is the mountain area of Napf and by the edge of it is the town of Willisau where the World Goldpanning Championships will take place next August. The temporary exhibitions are placed the room upstairs and this time there was a small display about the history of gold in Klondike.

This small but beautifully and professionally arranged museum is open only afternoons.

Opening hours:

1<sup>st</sup> April - 1<sup>st</sup> November Monday-Saturday 2pm-5 pm, Sunday 11 am-5pm.

2<sup>nd</sup> November-31<sup>st</sup> March Sunday 11 am-5 pm.

Address:

Museen im Schloss Burgdorf, Postfach 153, 3402 Burgdorf, Switzerland. Tel. 034 423 0214, fax 034 423 0448. E-mail:

[info@schloss-burgdorf.ch](mailto:info@schloss-burgdorf.ch), [www.schloss-burgdorf.ch](http://www.schloss-burgdorf.ch)

**The Gold Museum of Germany, 'GOLD-museum Theuern'** is situated in East Thuringen in a old, charming house by the side of the forest. The locality is so small that you are not able to find it in any map. The nearest bigger towns are Schalkau and Eisfeld.

The history of gold in Thuringen, reach as far as the beginning of our Christian era when the prospectors from the Mediterranean countries reached all the way to Germany. During the Middle Age several mines were opened in the area and last of them operated until the 1820s. The gold panning activities started again in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the new geological researches



were published about the gold deposits of the area. The Gold Museum was opened in 1997. The museum demonstrates very professionally the various points of the history of gold in the area. The founder and owner of the museum is a geologist. The occurrence of gold in the different ores and minerals is shown with illustrative material. The objects and the scale models supplement the exhibition as well as the examples of gold pans of different countries and historical shows.

The museum is an interesting place to visit where time passes fast, it is also possible to participate in the gold panning excursions.

There is a small shop at the museum where one can buy the literature, gold, stones and minerals as well as other souvenirs.

Opening hours: Every day 9 am - 5 pm, closed in November.

Address: GOLD-museum Theuern, Im Grund 4, 96528 Theuern/Thuringen. Tel/Fax 036766-87814. <http://www.goldmuseum.de>

*(The Chairman of Gold Museum Association Kauko Launonen and Director of Gold Museum Inkeri Syrjänen from Finland visited the gold museums in October 2002)*

## GOLDPANNING CHAMPIONSHIPS IN 2003

### National Championships in 2002

#### **New Zealand's Championships**

28.10.2002 Mining town of Cromwell, near Arrowtown

#### **Spanish Championships**

25.-27.7.2003, Navelgas, Tineo-Asturias

Information: Barciaecus - Goldpanning Association of Spain, P. Celestino, 2, 33873 Navelgas - Tineo, Asturias, Spain. [www.navelgas.com](http://www.navelgas.com)

#### **Swedish Open Championships**

25.-27.7.2003, Lannavaara, Sweden

Information: Kristallen Stenslip, Box 60, 98030 Lannavaara, Sweden. Tel. (0)981-31060, fax. (0)981-31037, e-mail: [info@kristallen.com](mailto:info@kristallen.com), [www.kristallen.com](http://www.kristallen.com)

#### **Finnish Championships**

1.-3.2003 Tankavaara

Information: Goldpanning Finnish Open, 99695 Tankavaara, Finland. Tel. +358-16-626171, fax. +358-16-626261, e-mail: [info@kultamuseo.inet.fi](mailto:info@kultamuseo.inet.fi), [www.tankavaara.fi](http://www.tankavaara.fi)

#### **Italian Championships**

6.7.9.2003 Balossa Bigli, along Po River, Tana del Lupo

Information: Federazione Italiana Cercatori d'oro, Armando Pasqualini, 15077 Predosa (AL), Italy. Tel. 00390382930300. E-mail: [lucapasqualini@virgilio.it](mailto:lucapasqualini@virgilio.it)

### World Championships

#### **World Championships in 2003**

12.-17.2003 Willisau, Switzerland

Information:

### Other competitions

#### **Kopparberg Open**

5.-6.7.2003 Kopparberg, Sweden

Information: Kopparberg Guldvaskarförening, Hans Prinselaar, Bångbrogården, 71400 Kopparberg, Sweden. Tel. 0580-12407, e-mail: [hoj.prinselaar@swinpnet.se](mailto:hoj.prinselaar@swinpnet.se)

#### **Ullånger Open**

12.-13.7.2003 Ullånger, Sweden

Information: Anki Hamberg, Viksäter 2550, 87032 Ullånger. Tel/Fax 0613-10669. E-mail: [miranatura@swinpnet.se](mailto:miranatura@swinpnet.se)

*The  
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