

Golden Times

1-2/03

**The official Newsletter of the
World Goldpanning Association** ISSN-1238-0083

Publisher: Kauko Launonen

Editors: Paul Thurkettle, Inkeri Syrjanen, Pirjo Muotkajarvi



From the President

Dear members It is about the time for my last editorial of this publication as the President of the WGA.



The passed years have been interesting, even somewhat heavy towards the end of my term. When the WGA was founded, there were only a few member countries, and we all knew each other. We had no problems. In the course of time our association has expanded into a worldwide organisation with a large number of gold panners in each member country. The WGA is now well-known and has established a certain status. This status has brought along some problems. In some member countries internal disputes where even religion and politics are involved, have arisen. That is unbelievable! The international co-operation of gold prospectors was initiated nearly three decades ago during the first Goldpanning World Championships in Lapland. A few years later Rudy Ertl from Austria summoned the meeting where our association was founded. He was elected the first president. The first sets of rules were very simple ones. We could not foresee our future in its current scale. An international association requires rules that are based on international laws, statutes and regulations. They are used to regulate our activities in a way that will satisfy us all and also help to avoid most problems. For several years we have been aware of the need for new rules. The economies of the association as well as other activities require a sound legal foundation. After years of preparatory work the member countries have now received the proposal for a new set of rules, which should cover all our needs. My sincere wish is that you read the proposal carefully and give feedback if needed. If no major amendments are required, we could adopt the new rules at the WGA general meeting in Switzerland.

In Switzerland the Congress will elect a new President for the WGA as well as the Vice-President, the Treasurer and the Secretary, who will make up the Executive Committee.

Their duties will undoubtedly be increasing in the future, if we want the WGA to be true global organisation of gold panning. So far the activities of the association have primarily focused on the Goldpanning World Championships. This should however, be only one target, although an important one. According to my opinion the WGA should, in the future, also work on restoring the traditions of gold prospecting and on improving the opportunities to pan for gold in the existing alluvial deposits.

As long as you can remember, I have stated the prerequisites for the President of the WGA. I want to point out that I lack most of them.

The support of members across national boundaries is essential. This task takes a lot of time - also during the Championships - so he/she will not be able to participate in the competition. Just imagine the President presenting a prize for himself or herself. Neutrality is the very essence for being the President. The President shall be prepared to represent the WGA at various occasions and to meet mayors, ministers and even heads of states.

I sincerely wish that both the Executive committee and the President would be elected from such member countries where gold panning is more than just a sport. Then the link to real life would be maintained.

Finally, I'd like to remind future organisers of the World Championships of the following: Before you apply for the championships, please carefully consider the economic realities. It is not appropriate that the fees collected from competitors cover the budget of the competition. The World Championships is a major event. You will need good and generous sponsors as well as an audience that is prepared to pay an admission fee. Also remember that a large and well-trained team is needed to organise the championships in order to make things run smoothly.

After a cold and snowy winter even the arctic gold creeks are now thawing and gold panners will soon be getting ready for the summer's adventures. See you in Willisaw

Treasurer's Report



It is said in English that, 'time flies!'. Well it certainly seems to have flown over the last six years, and I am pleased that the WGA now has a reasonably secure income funding stream, together with a capital reserve and even some assets! I will prepare my detailed annual report for the WGA council meeting in Willisau, Switzerland soon, but I just wanted to give you a quick summary of where the WGA is now financially as an organisation. It would also be a good time to think about what we want to do next – and this is a big question.

So firstly a quick summary of where we are now. In 1997/98 and 1998/99 we lost money and in each year Tankavaara very kindly made up the shortfall. Then, like turning a big ship, things began to change: 1999/00 reserve 738 USD, 2000/01 reserve 1752 USD, 2001/02 reserve 3042 USD. We achieved this increase in our reserves through two basic principles – we spent less and earned more! I think that most people know that we earned more through creating new sources of income, but what you may not know is that much of our reserve has been built thanks to the very good work of the Golden Times team. Pirjo, Inkeri and Paul have given their time freely and made such good use of modern electronic information systems that they have brought our costs down massively and we should respect what they have achieved.

And what about the future? I will report to the WGA council this year our biggest reserve ever, but what do we want to do with this money?? A few years ago I said to somebody that I wanted to build up the WGA's funds, and he said, 'Why?'. Now this is a very good question. Are there new things that we as an organisation would like to do, please think about this and talk to your national representatives. Money is about choices and life and what it can do – not just making a pile of it bigger!

Vincent Thurkettle
WGA Treasurer

Editorial:

Welcome to this edition of Golden Times and sadly the last that Inkeri and Pirjo will be acting, as editors of the publication and the last Kauko will be the publisher. In fact Pirjo has already left for a new job in Finland that we all hope will be a successful one for her. Also we have the election of the new President in August and this edition has the biographies of the five candidates. All in all, an exciting year. We would like to ask any budding reporters out there to sign on to becoming a roving reporter for Golden Times. We need more reports on gold related stories, techniques and adventures throughout our world community! See you in Switzerland!



Nominations for President of the World Goldpanning Association

Candidates for the position of President of W.G.A 2003 :

<i>Gossage, Mick,</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>
<i>Karlsson, Ken,</i>	<i>Sweden</i>
<i>Orava, Esko,</i>	<i>Finland</i>
<i>Ramella Bagneri, Arturo</i>	<i>Italy</i>
<i>Thurkettle, Vincent,</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>

The following biographies are reproduced below in the same format as they were sent to the WGA council.

Mick Gossage

Biographical Statement For Mick Gossage. Great Britain.



Golden greetings to you all.

National Association.

In 1990 I was elected the Chairman of the British Goldpanning Association Organising Committee for our very successful World Goldpanning Championships of 1992.

During 1991 I became the "President" of the British Goldpanning Association and held the office for 11 years.

I have organised every British Goldpanning Championships since 1992.

I have represented Britain on the WGA Council since 1991 and in 1994 I was elected, "Chairman of the WGA Rules Committee".

Since then my committee have introduced some major changes to the WGA rules and have assisted organisers with their competitions.

I have been at the heart of the WGA since 1991 and ask for your support for the chance to continue the good work done by our retiring President.

Mick Gossage.

Ken Karlsson

Biographical Statement.

My name is Ken Karlsson, and I am a 48 years young man from Kopparberg, Sweden.

The interest for gold and goldpanning started as a general mineral interest which I have had since I were a small Boy. But then, since we started with goldpanning competition in Kopparberg in 1984. And I was one of those who took the initiative to that, since that it has been gold and nothing but gold, that matters for me.

I went to my first World Goldpanning Championship in Tankavaara 1987, and have been to 13 Championships so far.

1991 when Kopparberg hosted the Championship I was working as judge and scrutineer.

I have been a member of the Swedish Goldpanning Associations executive committee for some years, and I have also been president of Kopparberg Goldpanning Association for 7 years.

I am a member of WGA rule committee.

Although, the most important thing that have happen to me, concerning goldpanning, is that I meet my wife Ulla, during the Championship in Scotland 1992.

Together with her, I run my own firm Gold&Adventure, in which we teach people (so far approx. 30.000) how to pan for gold, and we also tell them a lot of the history of gold from all over the world.

I have been asked to candidate for the president of WGA, and I am very proud of that.

Although I must say this!!!! I know that the present president of WGA, don't think that the president of WGA should compete in the World Championship. If that is to be a rule, forbidden the president to compete, than, I am not interested of the president job.

For me the World Champion competition is the highlight of the year, which I am not willing to give up. So if you want me to be the next WGA president, then you have to accept a competing president.

Kopparberg, Sweden 2003-05-12

With best regards

KEN KARLSSON
Ken Karlsson"

ESKO ORAVA

Biographical statement



ESKO ORAVA; date of birth Sept 15th 1954

I have been serving since 1974 in Finnish Defence Forces as an officer. I retired Apr 1st 2003 from regular service.

I have taken part in Finnish Goldpanning Championships as a volunteer since 1978 and I have been a member of the organizing committee from 1982. Last 16 years I have been the Chief Justice during the competitions in Tankavaara.

As a competitor I have taken part in the World Goldpanning Championships since 1986.

Some positions of trust I am proud to have in the Lappish Goldfields:

- 1) Vice President of the Gold prospector Museum Association
- 2) Vice President of Gold prospectors Association of Finland
- 3) Member of the executive committee of the Friends of Lapinkulta

Sinettä 30th May 2003

Yours sincerely Esko Orava

Arturo Ramella Bagneri

Founder member of Biella Goldprospectors' Association (A.B.C.d'Oro) and President since 1991, Arturo Ramella Bagneri has worked tirelessly to share his deep love for his "Golden World".

With clear ideas, unflinching energy, personal charisma and a willingness to work side by side with and appreciate the contributions of others, Arturo shows himself to possess leadership qualities that inspire those around him.

Open to new ideas and dialogue, with an excellent command of English and "golden friends" everywhere, he has a global vision of the world.

Achievements include:

- Editing our quality newsletter "La Picaja";
- Introducing hundreds of schoolchildren annually to goldpanning;
- Setting up of "Museum of Gold and the Bessa";
- Representing A.B.C.d'Oro on all levels in a professional manner;
- Organising goldpanning competitions and meetings including the annual, friendly OrAlp, but especially the FANTASTIC 2001 European Championships;
- Building Victimula, the amazing, Italian Goldpanners' village.

We hereby propose Arturo Ramella Bagneri as a candidate for
President of the W.G.A.
Thank you very much,

Biella, Italy,
May 30th 2003

Vincent Thurkettle

Biographical Statement



My Friends,

I have been a gold-pro prospector for 27 years.

I have attended World Goldpanning Championships for 15 years.

I have had a place on the WGA World Council as a National Representative and then a member of the Board for 14 years.

I enjoy all that gold can bring us – friends, travel, adventure, money, romance, history, tradition and knowledge.

Over the years I have met with many of you to talk about gold or competition techniques, or rivers, music, food and drinking, or our families and children; in fact just about everything life is!

Gold breathes ‘life’ for us and I love it!

I believe that the things I have learned, as a forester, a soldier, a father, a prospector and working with the WGA for many years, have given me the experience and background to now be considered for the job of WGA President.

So my friends, we begin an exciting time!

Vincent Thurkettle



World Goldpanning Championships 2003 in Willisau, Switzerland
August 12th to 17th, 2003

Dear goldprospectors

Welcome to Willisau in the heart of Switzerland. The Swiss Goldprospectors' Association is proud to be your host during the World Goldpanning Championships 2003. The organisation committee is currently preparing for this most exciting event for the goldprospectors community in the year 2003. Two interesting excursions including goldpanning in the Napf are, a gold symposium with renowned experts about Swiss gold occurrences and – perhaps – a gold medal await you.

You find all the information to register for the championship and the excursions as well as to prepare for a pleasant stay in Willisau/Switzerland on our website <http://www.goldwaschen.ch/gold2003>



Programme

Tuesday, Aug. 12th and Wednesday, Aug. 13th:

- Goldpanning excursions to the Bernese side of the Napf Area with visit to the Helvetic Goldmuseum Burgdorf, Goldpanning-Tour to the Lucerne side of the Napf Area
- On site registration
- Wednesday 19:30h Opening Ceremony

Thursday, Aug. 14th:

- Open-Team contests
- Goldsymposium
- Annual Meeting WGA

Friday, Aug. 15th:

- Preliminary heats for official categories
- WGA parade

Saturday, Aug. 16th:

- Quarter and semi finals
- Evening entertainment and dance

Sunday, Aug. 17th:

- Finals all categories and all teams
- Awards/Closing Ceremony

The gold from the nearby Napf area



The Napf gold has its origins in the Alps. It was 50 million years ago that the Alps were formed; they concealed the gold lodes which were primary sources of the Napf gold. In the Miocene Era large drainage systems transported Alpine detritus containing gold to the plains. Thus the Napf Massif is made of alluvial deposits. Today, these sedimentary rocks are made of conglomerate, sandstone and clay layers. The alluvial Napf gold occurs as gold flakes. Nuggets are found rarely. It is characterised by a

porous surface and a brilliant yellow colour. The size of the grains varies between 0.2 and 2 mm across and at least 0.1 mm thickness. The Napf Area of Central Switzerland is supposed to be the historically first known gold occurrence in Switzerland and has been known by the Helvets and the Romans. Today the creeks and rivers are well known to recreational prospectors. The untouched natural scenery of the Swiss Prealps and the possibility to quickly find a gold flake in the creek gravels make the Napf Area a perfect gold locality. Join us in the Napf Area and the World Goldpanning Championships 2003.

Excursions

August 12th, 2003: Emmental - Around the Napf

- 0830 Departure in Willisau (WGC site). Drive by coach via Huttwil to Affoltern.
- Visit of a **Cheese-showdairy**
- Drive via Heimiswil to Burgdorf
- Visit of the **Helvetic Gold Museum** in the castle of Burgdorf. At the moment there is the exhibition "Goldfever" shown.

- Lunch-break beneath the castle on the border of the **Emme-river** until 1500h (Enough time for goldpanning/Games for people who do not want to pan)
- 1500h Drive from Burgdorf via Ruederwil, Schuepbach and Eggiwil to Siehen
- Visit of an **Alphorn manufactory**
- Return to Willisau via Schangnau, Wiggen, Schuepfheim, Entlebuch and Wolhusen.

Price per person (including lunch and one liter of beer): sfr. 40.- (The number of persons is limited to 90. Registrations first come first served)

- 0900 Departure in Willisau (WGC site) by coach via Wolhusen to the Lucerne side of the Napf area
- 1000 Arrival on a creek in the Lucerne Napf area
- **Goldpanning** until 1200h
- Lunch break: **Barbecue!**
- Decide on yourself during the afternoon: **Goldpanning** or visit of a **carcoal-site** (carcoal production by locals) or **hike** through the Napf area
- 1700h Departure, ca. 1800h Arrival in Willisau

August 13th, 2003: The Napf goldpanning tour



Price per person (including lunch): sfr. 25.- (The number of persons is limited to 86. Registrations first come first served)

Goldsymposium 2003

Thursday, 16 August 2003, Bürgersaal Willisau 17.30h-19.00h



The World Goldpanning Championships 2003 in Willisau will be the setting for a gold symposium. The following three well renowned experts will give you an insight in the Swiss gold occurrences by word and image:

- Peter Pfander: The placer gold occurrence in the Napf area (Lucerne/Berne)
- Thomas Pettke, ETH Zurich: Gold mineralisation in quartz veins as base material for placer gold and models of the formation of gold-quartz-ore shown at the example of the Monte Rosa gold district
- Beda Hofmann, University of Berne: The gold occurrence in the Tavetscher Zwischenmassiv and the Somvitg (Grison).

The lectures will be published in a colorful special edition of the Goldwäscherzytig in English and German which will be available for purchase at the gold symposium.

Accommodation in Willisau

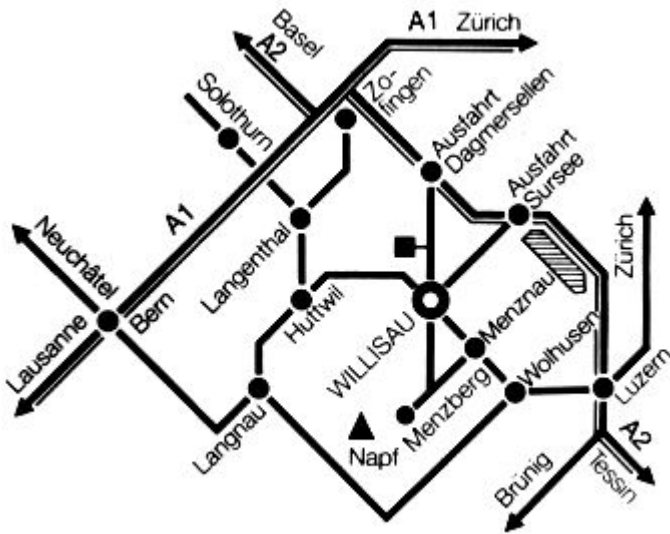
Accommodation

- Camping: 10 minutes walking from championship site. Tents are free for competitors. No reservation is necessary.

Motorhomes cost sfr. 20.- for the week.

- Dormitory will be made available (sfr. 10.- per person and night).
- Hotels: A list of hotels in Willisau and the area is available on the website of Willisau-Tourism. They can be contacted directly or through:

Regionales Verkehrsbüro Willisau
Bahnhofstrasse 1
CH-6130 Willisau
Phone +41 (0)41 970 26 66
Fax +41 (0)41 970 06 66



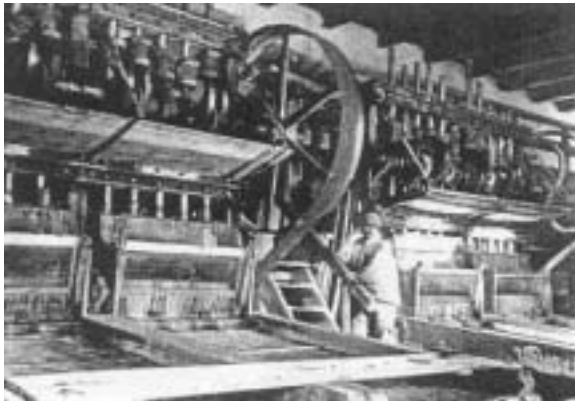
Web: <http://www.willisau-tourismus.ch>
E-Mail info@willisau-tourismus.ch

The Swiss team welcomes you!



Fotos: Willy Lüdi

RAMBA : A ROMANIAN JOURNEY



Through my book which was kindly placed on the website

http://utenti.tripod.it/goldprospecting/libri_v.html by my friend Aleardo Salina, I had the pleasure of meeting and recruiting as a member of the ABC d'Oro Mr Natalino Vicenzino, a native of Portogruaro, Veneto. Together we decided to embark on a week's trip to Romania and now, here I am, along with him, to tell one of my little stories.

Natalino, a draughtsman, had had contacts in the past with a large company from Veneto which deals in the removal of earth and bitumen and which had, several years previously, opened several yards throughout Romania where alluvial soil was uncovered. And it was thus that Natalino, on reading in my book that Italian alluvial soil from Padana is particularly auriferous, made the connection between this earth and gold. The invitation we received from the above-mentioned company to spend some time at their yards as potential gold-prospecting sites, was tempting and of great interest to us.

Not being a qualified geologist, I decided to simply "follow my nose" and to rely on certain flair as well as 32 years of experience and research with varying degrees of fortune on our rivers.

Leaving aside time for travelling (about 1,200 km.), only five days remained to us, far too little time to examine an entire country where, apart from this lack of time we also encountered bad weather which prevented us from following our established plan. We therefore restricted ourselves to the inspection of lands adjacent to the two biggest yards, one of which is at SEBES, dislocated in an enormous alluvial basin embraced by the Carpathian mountain chain. Our first assays were carried out in the Muresui river; in two different spots we

managed to collect a small sample of very tiny gold particles, using only a pan or trulla for washing as the river was without a gradient and the material to be washed very muddy. That is all we found during our two excursions here in the little good weather which came our way.

We next travelled about 280 km north east to Bistrita where our hosts "TONIOLO GROUP" have another yard. Here the local morphology appears completely different from that of the previous locality; although this too seems to be an alluvial basin it is formed prevalently of compact porphyries and is devoid of mineralization. Labouring for an entire morning in the local river, the Bistrita, and finding only a miserly sample of even tinier dimensions than that of the previous locality, was enough to convince us that the long journey hadn't been worth the trouble, and all this in the rain...

So we took ourselves off, back to base camp at SEBES, still in the rain.

At this point only one last day was left before our departure so Natalino and I decided together to go to visit a place which we knew only by name, "ROSIA MONTANA", which in Italian means Monte Rosa (Pink Mountain). We set out, with the scant information at our disposal, in search of this locality, which from here on, I can define, as magnificent. We didn't know whether it was famous for primary or alluvial gold, but it never hurts to have a spirit of research and of adventure too and in fact this led us to discover many things that I feel can be of interest to a lot of Italians.



The town of Rosia Montana is reached when about 100 km from SEBES you follow National Route 1 northwards to Alba Julia. From here, to the left along Route 74 you reach the town of Zlatna where a huge heap of whitish slag furrowed by karst channels, the result of the rains, can be seen. This is

what remains of a copper mine, recognizable by an enormous chimney on top of a hill. A right turn at the next crossroads takes you to Rosia Montana. It must immediately be reported that we found no gold here but how immense was our joy on discovering the history of this interesting locality.

We discover that the Romans arrived here too, as they did at the Bessa, more than 2,000 years ago, in 131 BC to be precise. In the town centre, we came to a tumbledown building with a vaulted entrance and columns, above which appeared the mining symbol (two crossed hammers), and the date: 1787. Natalino, who speaks Romanian very well, asked an old man for the location of the mine. The answer he received was: " Raise your eyes towards the mountains that surround the town". The most apt word coming to mind is gruyère, holes to the left and to the right of old gallery entrances, as well as enormous dumps of sterile rocks stretching down to the foot of the town.

We were driven by curiosity to visit one of the many volcanic lakes existing in the zone. I regretted having left my camera in my room as not every day does one meet with certain sights. It was the month of September and the autumnal colours were reflected in the calm waters: what a vision!



Afterwards we took ourselves off to the nearby dump, but briefly, as the mines are in operation and it was prudent to distance ourselves as soon as possible. At this point we decided to follow a trickle coming out of the lake which we had previously seen in the hope that it would become a stream where some assays could be carried out or, if possible, a sluice set up for a somewhat more consistent search, but because of the previous night's rain the

stream was growing wider and wider and more and more impetuous.

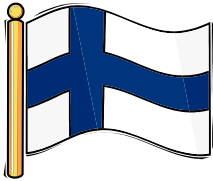
During our attempt at approaching the stream we met an elderly, local peasant woman who was very kind and helpful to us in our search. This lady, Melania, confided that she had worked for the mine over a period of no less than thirty-seven years as an analyst in the analysis dept.. She recounted having, in some analyses, come up with a percentage of as much as one kilo of gold per ton of rock.

What gave us most pleasure however was her information regarding the existence of a gallery "museum" which offered guided visits. The museum is situated in " PRIMERIA" Square, (the primiera being the house of the primiero, the town's mayor).

A short time later, accompanied by a guide (an ex-miner with over thirty years' experience), we crossed the threshold of a typical entrance to the mine called "ALBURNUS MAJOR" which has a commemorative plate reading 131 B.C. From here descends a long, stone stairway of no less than 148 steps leading to a maze of galleries still in perfect working order after over 2,000 years and without any supports in wood. You can imagine for yourselves what emotion we felt at the thought that all this work had been carried out with a hammer and chisel for a distance of several hundreds of metres. Moreover, our guide told us that the mine was still being developed at other levels in order to be able to follow the enormous vein which in some points was still perfectly visible and palpable!!

On exiting this gallery one comes to a big square all around which are placed antique machines, which were used particularly for grinding the material extracted and for the separation of the gold. There was also an old trolley made entirely of wood; the wheels and even its little tracks were also made of wood. In the centre of the square were three hexagonal columns in basalt from a nearby locality, which we had been unable to see, but which was certainly the cause of the creation of the contact zone so rich in minerals and particularly in gold.

There is a 145-page volume on sale at the museum, illustrating in detail the history of the town and its mines both Roman and Romanian and from this we have borrowed some significant photos



Gold Museum in Tankavaara soon celebrates its 30th anniversary

By Kauko Launonen



Director of the Gold Museum showing the museum area to the President of Finland, Urho Kekkonen, in 1977 when the first World Goldpanning Championships took place.

(photo: Archive of the Gold Museum)

The only gold museum that demonstrates the global history of gold is located in Tankavaara, Finland. Its' basic exhibition tells naturally the story of the colourful gold rushes in Lapland but when the visitors see the Golden World pavilion showing the gold history world-wide they understand the power of the yellow metal.

The Gold Museum was established at the time when gold panning in Lapland was based on the work of only a few hermit old-timers of Lemmenjoki. For them gold panning was more like a way of life and did not have any economical importance.

The establishing of a Gold Museum was credited to the record of the meeting of the Gold Prospectors' Union of Lapland in May 1973. Members presiding over the birth of Gold Museum among other people were Heikki Kokko, Niilo Raumala, Yrjö Korhonen and Inkeri Syrjänen, who is the present director of museum. These people were thinking that it's important to record memories and material which otherwise will be lost.

Inkeri Syrjänen got the task to begin that hard job. In addition to a teaching post she collected

documents and interviewed old men of golden brooks.

The first objects were collected along the Tankavaara's Hopioja Creek. As time went there was an exhibition of those collected materials in the corner of the gold panning site's café in Tankavaara. The beginning was undemanding but it got customers to be interested.

Nuthouse

In 1975 the Gold Museum got its first building. The piece of land was hired from the National Board of Forestry and placed on it was a transported a hexagonal nuthouse from Varpupää. In crusty snow in the spring the house was taking to pieces and transported to Tankavaara by motor sledges.

In the voluntary work there were many famous people from the gold fields, among them Pelle Kankainen. The Nuthouse started to set up in the spring and summer. There we saw among other people the chairman of gold digger's union Heikki Kokko, Nipa Raumala and Yrjö Korhonen.

Museum pieces and enlarged copies quickly filled that small house. The official opening ceremony was during the Finnish Goldpanning Championships. Now the Gold Museum was a real museum!

Real Museum

Many people thought that having their own building is the mark of real museum and this was a good start. Connections with National Board of Antiquities and Historical Monuments were developed quickly. We were given a little government subsidy for the costs of recording but almost everything was done by voluntary work.

The Nuthouse was too small, this was known already before setting up. After the opening ceremony we started to plan a new building and a suitable building was found from Härkäselkä. This was a main building from a gold mine, which had set up in the 1920's. The department of employment took some of the costs of transporting and building as it was moved to Tankavaara. Republic president of Finland, Urho Kekkonen, came to mason a foundation stone. His visit gave some belief in the future but also it got people to know about Tankavaara around the world.

The double-decked timber building was ready during the winter 1977-78. Topping out celebrated on the sixth of December, Independence Day. When the last timbers were lifting, the temperature was minus thirty.

Nipa Raumala, Yrjö Korhonen, Inkeri Syrjänen and Kauko Launonen gave half of their salary to help with the building material costs. From the many voluntary workers "Father" Jussi Mikkonen is worth special mention.

In the late winter in 1978 the first exhibition was moved into the Gold Museum Härkäselkä. There were four rooms; three for the exhibition and one was reserved for the staff residence. Real working rooms were not available yet, the most valuable documents were kept in the bank vault. The house of the director worked as an office. Conservation works were performed during the summer.

Planning a new Museum building

The museum had suitable rooms for small exhibitions, but they were not large enough and we had shortages of space every day as well as no real storerooms.

The Director of the Museum, Inkeri Syrjänen started to plan rebuilding and the Gold Prospectors' Union of Lapland accepted it. A Student at the Architect-institution Mikko Etula won the planning competition. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour were interested and started negotiations. Negotiations went on with a positive mind. The administration of the Gold Museum didn't accept everything. The condition of the government subsidy was that societies take responsibility for the Museum and establish Museum-activity.

Using an earthmover in gold panning

The recently established Gold Museum Association submitted an aid-application to build a new museum on a piece of land in Tankavaara. The Application was approved and department of labour granted 2,5 million Finnmark to this project.

The activity of the Gold Museum was underrated in some quarters but when the size of this rebuilding project came out, it woke up many protesters of the museum activity.

During those years people interested in using earthmovers for gold panning which destroyed many valuable gold historical artefacts created a conflict with the museum as it defended historical values.

Individuals who defended free mechanical earthmoving started a campaign against the museum. They even got the decision-makers of the municipality of Inari on their side. Their grounds for that was that the Gold Museum was robbing the gold tradition into the municipality of Sodankylä. These fights were handled in the courts and the courts of Appeal. The museum won and could continue with the work. Rebuilding got ready to the 10th anniversary in 1983. There were modern rooms to the gold historical exhibition, office-rooms and some other rooms to work in new museum building. Gold-tradition had gotten spaces it worth. Gold Museum was already science-institution.

International Golden World

First gold panning-competition in Tankavaara was organized in 1974. Soon happening became internationalized and a first world championship in gold panning was in 1977. Then Gold Museum got first international contacts. A few years after that they established the World gold panning union.

Information about gold historical happenings around the world and world history started to accumulate to Tankavaara. There organized little international exhibitions. From these

exhibitions developed the idea to build global gold historical basic-exhibition to the Gold Museum. Like that was born Golden World.

Story about the man and gold

Golden World - the story about the man and gold. The exhibitions show the history of gold of over twenty countries all with important places of gold history. When all this was being planned they were talking to countries. Many contacts were created even between the embassies of different countries.

Already during the planning stage some countries disappeared from map of World and then was born new ones. This has happened often during the gold history which has taken thousands years. That's why it's the best way to speak about the areas.

Oldest document in Golden World is the copy of oldest map in the world. That map tells about the gold panning in the desert between the Nile and the Red Sea. First mentions about the gold found from the Bible. Chapter two in the Bible and the stories of Greek mythology tell that Golden Fleece has been in channel of gold panners or there has been a sheepskin on the panning-table, which collected gold nuggets from sand.

The oldest original object is from 1400's. It is a part of sluice-boxes, which presented from deceased Czechoslovakia. They were found from site of bridge.

In Golden World there are departments around the world. Visitors can get to know the gold history among other places Alaska, Australia, Brazil, California, China and Japan. There you can also find an explanation of distension the Kingdom of Roma. The Romans were looking for gold and slaves to the gold panning.

Golden world is a part, which has enlarged fastest in Gold Museum. Gold Museum in Tankavaara has become the thing of whole world cause it's the only one, which tells about international gold panning. Here you can collect the tradition of gold panning of whole world.

Future in Gold Museum

That's a question! Gold Museum has grown up an international science institution during that 30 years. It is the most important international tourist attraction of Sodankylä and also one of the whole Lapland.

Unity for society has done with modest resources. Now it would be high time for society, mainly municipality of Sodankylä, to acknowledge the work and take responsibility of continuation.

Target of jubilee year

First exhibition of Gold Museum was twenty years ago. The theme was history of gold panning in Finland and Lapland. That was an opening exhibition of new building of Gold Museum. An exhibition had planned and built by Museum staff and voluntary workers.

During these years there have visited over 500 000 people and still it gets positive feedback. Lots of new materials and knowledge about the gold history of Lapland has increased there during these twenty years. Those years have also left own prints to tradition and exhibition-technic has developed.

Gold Museum and The University of Lapland together have started to plan to renew basic-exhibition honour of 30th anniversary. The target is to get it ready by summer 2004.

SOME FACTS ABOUT GOLDPANNING IN FINLAND

1870 Goldrush to Ivaloriver, 500 men

1946 Goldrush to Lemmenjoki-area, 250 men

2000 New Goldrush to Lapland

*Over 400 gold claims

*Over 2000 hobby prospectors

*About 20 professional placer gold mines

*Foreigners can also make the claims

Goldpanning competitions

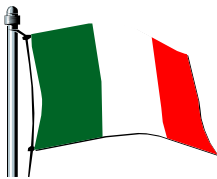
- *First Goldpanning Finnish Championship 1974
- *29th Finnish Championships 2002, 350 competitors
- *Year 2003 about 20 competitions all around Finland
- *All together more than 1000 competitors

Associations

- *Goldprospector Museum Association
- *Goldprospectors Association of Finland
- *Association of Goldminers of Lapland
- *Friends of Lappish Gold
- *Many smaller goldpanner clubs

Lapland is the last wilderness of Europe. There are gold bearing areas between Tankavaara and Lemmenjoki, where it is possible to find gold. Every summer more than 2000 hobby prospectors go to the goldfields, they have about 400 claims. In Lapland are also many professional placer goldmines, using digging machines. Goldproduction is important for jewellery makers, because they like to use the original nuggets.

Goldmining is also very important for tourism in Lapland. Every summer thousands of tourist try their luck on the guided mines - and if they will listen to their guide, they will find gold!



OrAlp 6 By Geraldine McCrossan



Thursday morning, May 1st 2003 , 8.55am
"Late! ...I'm going to be late I realise as I ease my Mini steadily up the proverbially never-ending curves to Zubiena and thence on to Sala. Queen's "Another one bites the dust" blasting my eardrums. The appointed meeting time is 9am at the camping site's cafeteria for cappuccino (never touch the stuff...) or strong espresso coffee accompanied by sinfully mouth-watering croissants. All, needless to say, in the scintillating company of Arturo and his gang. But today is

no ordinary meeting of friendly, albeit hungry local goldpanning souls... It's the first day of OrAlp 6...my personal FIRST OrAlp. I'm so happy and excited! Dying to see friends old and new and set out with them on an adventure that should last 4 whole days! And I'm going to be late!!"

OrAlp, for any of you who are unfamiliar with this event, is an annual, non-competitive goldpanning meeting of friends from the Alpine countries of France, Switzerland and Italy. It is organised and hosted on a rotating basis by each of these three countries. It was the brainchild of three Presidents, Arturo Ramella, Jacques Brest and Gilles Gautier and this year we were into our 6th edition.

But I was to discover as I parked in Sala that morning that my old Geography teacher back in Ireland many years ago had been wrong.... The Alps, provided that gold-fever is sufficiently high, are a truly remarkable range that extend right up to Holland (which I had believed to be flatter than flat..) for lo and behold, here taking part in OrAlp were Carla and Martin, complete with pet Labrador, all the way from Maastricht!! A delegation from Rauris, Austria and some people from Germany completed the picture.

And Arturo with Anna, Bruno and Davide put up a mobile office to register participants and confirm reservations for campsite and restaurant. In all we would number 70, some due to arrive only the following day. The stage was set.

Now, I may have led you to believe that these friends old and new had come to Italy only for the coffee, the marvellous food and the companionship. Important factors all, but incomplete. For these people, I suspect, are running a high temperature caused by liquid gold which flows along with the blood in their veins. Highly contagious and hereditary it has proved to be. In fact, by midday, all were on the banks of the Elvo, hard at work, determined to build up an impressive number of golden flakes to show people back home. I had accepted a lift as far as the river with my friend Paola, our Association's neo Secretary and we broke the 20-minute journey to do something I had long been intending to do, namely, take some photographs of a truly unique archaeological find, the magnificent remains of a Roman washing-canal or flume situated at the Barbera quarry not far from the river Elvo. (Visit our website www.cercatoridoro.it or www.bessa.it for more details).

The weather was kind to us on this first day of OrAlp 6.

Valter and Valerio, true to their standard, had selected a good spot for us to work.

The Elvo banks resounded with babel-like frenzy. There was much laughter and new arrivals were greeted with shouts of recognition and hugs. Picnics were eaten and goodies shared out. Sweaters were systematically discarded as the sun, unseasonably strong, bore down on us with growing intensity. Having managed as usual to soak my wellies and socks while crossing the river, the socks, spread on a rock were dry within minutes.

It was a historic day for my husband, Carlo, who having finally succumbed to the fact that his wife was irretrievably lost to gold fever, had decided to try his hand at panning for the very first time. I should have guessed that he would be better at it than me!!

Home for a quick wash and change of clothes and by 8pm there we are, all looking remarkably spick and span, gathered around a long table in the restaurant, hungrily anticipating dinner.

Known to be somewhat of a chatterbox (!), I did full justice to my reputation throughout the meal and, in fact, have scant recollection of what was placed before me (apart from the excellent Prosecco!!). But I DO remember my conversation with our new Dutch friends whose English was impeccable. Carla is a Goldsmith specialising in artistic jewellery who wanted to investigate the roots of her profession, as it were. Martin is an economist who had no particular interest in goldpanning but OrAlp was to cause him to be struck down by fever; another victim! It WAS an enjoyable evening.

Friday dawned gloomy with gathering rain-clouds. And indeed, before long it was pouring down.

Personally, I was busy teaching at school all morning, so all I could do was look out the window during lessons at the downpour and wonder if my friends would muster the determination of their forbears at the Klondike ... I learned later that many had indeed left, undaunted, for the river.

Others, accompanied by Arturo and Gigi, had done a tour of the Bessa park and the Museum of Gold.

Mad, I thought, every last one of 'em! But they were rewarded by 2pm when the rain ceased and a pale, rather hazy sun began to shine.

I quickly changed from "teacher" mode to "goldpanner" mode and set off to meet them on the river where I managed to get lost among bulldozers that were working near the quarry on the construction of a new road. Perhaps it was the wording of my text message "Get your asses down to the river, please!" that caused Arturo and Gigi to miraculously drive up, accompanying no less a dignitary than Ramba himself. Who undoubtedly needs no introduction from me..... Very special to us all, he resembles a kind of benevolent grandfather, the one we would all have liked to have. And on topics auriferous there is nothing that he does not know.

The afternoon was spent in a joyful atmosphere on the river; hard work, friendly teasing, jokes (occasionally rather naughty!), good Dutch coffee freshly brewed by Martin and served in splendid, insulated stainless steel mugs (oh where oh where can we find some mugs like that...?)

When, in crossing the river I succeeded in getting wet again, this time right up to my

bottom, my highly amused French friends gaily calling out "Natation!!!" ... Never mind! Soon dry in the sun... And during all this camaraderie the number of gold flakes is visibly growing, both in sluice box and tube. Home again to wash again and change again (I'm getting pretty good at this!) and by now my car knows the way to Sala.

Another dinner, giant glasses of beer, Arturo who devises an idea for a crazy goldpanning videogame the likes of which only he himself could explain to you! Feel free to contact him, but remember that all rights belong to the A.B.C. d'Oro!!! Valter and Valerio arrive late but, with Gigi, compensate by entertaining us until the hour of 1.30am with tales of their exploits last year in Australia where they traveled to compete in the World Championships. What adventures! Ranging from getting lost (seriously lost) in a forest, to the time when one of them who shall remain nameless left his dentures behind somewhere and noticed their absence only 1,000 km further down the road...!!

I could try to lie to you and say that next morning I leapt out of bed with a lust for life! I didn't.

But good ol' Mini got me safely to Sala and breakfast with the group and besides, it was a glorious, sunny morning. Our visitors headed happily off once again to the river. Some of our members remained at base-camp to add final touches to the diplomas for individual participants and presentation baskets for each participating guest nation or association. The result was superb, the Italians being Masters in (among other things) the art of presentation and packaging.

Paola, Anna and I then followed the others to the river-banks where thankfully at least on this occasion I refrained from amusing all and



sundry by half drowning!

The river was a hive of activity, with sluice boxes of every conceivable design competing for space.

Gold was being found by all and occasionally a shout would be heard from some fortunate panner who had found a "big one", or "Bestia" (Beast) as it is sometimes jokingly referred to by us!

All this time, most of us were also steadily acquiring a golden colour on our skin; while mercifully, our old friends the mosquitoes did not try to gatecrash this party.

Arturo and his daughter Martina gave me a lift home. We sang all the way, "Why don't you take another little piece of my heart?" Poor Freddie....! but spirits were high. This is a really great weekend. And at 7pm one of the French delegations is holding a pre-dinner reception to mark the fact that they are hosting next year's (VII edition in the south of France.).

So, interesting nibbles and aperitifs, posing for photographs all together, the presentations and a speech by our President who suggests that our Austrian friends should consider hosting OrAlp, thereby making it a 4-nation



event.

Our Swiss friend Beatrice Rouge has very kindly brought some delicious chocolate eggs; thank you!

Dinner was a long, abundant and noisy affair as final-evening dinners on these occasions tend to be. I would rather not guess how many litres of beer were drunk! Just as well we had an entire dining-room to ourselves.... The recurrent theme however, in all the conversations that I heard was, not surprisingly, gold. -Perhaps related to equipment, perhaps to championships, perhaps to strange anecdotes or personalities or books on the subject but always returning to that auriferous common denominator which was our reason for being together in this place, at this moment in time.

Meanwhile, the chef had done himself proud. The grilled meat was sumptuous, the French-fries irresistible. The atmosphere was simply marvellous and nobody wanted it to end. But end it would have to. And we were just beginning to make a move when the Swiss saved the day (or rather the evening!) by announcing an imminent, midnight birthday toast. Down we sat again in happy anticipation and on the stroke of twelve the champagne duly flowed! But the evening DID eventually draw to a close..... (Happy birthday Renè!)

....and Sunday morning was suddenly upon us. By now it was a familiar sequence: drive to Sala, wake up over breakfast to a cacophony of languages, transfer to the river-banks, pan and chat, chat and pan, eat, drink and be merry... But this morning the pattern was interrupted in that many of our friends were already leaving, setting out on their homeward journey. Thus, before taking ourselves to the river-banks, I joined some others of the Biella association in order to bid farewell to our guests on the Elvo bridge, in this way sparing them the effort of crossing the river to reach us. Small mementos were exchanged amidst promises to keep in touch. Many of these friends we are looking forward to seeing soon again in Willisau, Switzerland at the World Championships. But what makes



OrAlp special is the ABSENCE of medals, cups and podiums.

The prizes are friendship and in a small tube the fruits of your labour, both of which accompany you on the road home.

The months of planning have proved worthwhile for the organisers. And my personal first OrAlp will remain forever in my mind.

But let me leave the final word to one of our guests, a very nice French lady, Mme. Claude. On saying goodbye on Sunday morning we

agreed that the previous evening's festivities had been extraordinary. To my suggestion that perhaps we had enjoyed ourselves a little "too much", she at once countered: "Ce n'est jamais trop!!!"



False Hope!

A few years ago I had an idea for an exciting prospecting trip, but I had a lot of trouble finding people to go with me. "You want us to dive in raw sewage?!! You have got to be kidding!"

The Dream

There is a place on the south coast of England where there is a most beautiful gold. The gold is alloyed with palladium and has grown into wonderful dendritic 'ferns' and little solid blobs within calcite veins which run through bedded limestone on a peninsular called Hope's Nose. The gold is so special and rare that a law against collectors cutting samples from the cliffs now protects the rocky site. And this is where my idea came from, 'I wonder what is on the seabed? There might be rocks and boulders of the gold-rich vein material just sitting amongst the seaweed!' A pretty typical prospectors dream!

The site has many problems of access and safety, but the biggest problem by far is the fact that the main sewer for a very large holiday town is a tunnel through the cliffs, right through the gold veins, which just dumps it's stinking brown 'soup' in the sea. The discovery of the gold at Hope's Nose is credited to an eminent geologist and Sir Arthur Russell, on hearing of the find in 1927, went and collected many fine specimens of the crystallized gold. So what was there now I wondered? What was hidden from collectors under the sea, protected by five meters of seawater and a topping of filthy 'soup'?

The Team

This was a big project for me and I made careful plans through the winter ready for a late spring diving expedition. I bought a dive boat and gathered all the knowledge and sub-aqua and prospecting equipment that was needed to dive and work the site. I also took medical advice – which was, "Don't do it.". Not very helpful really! But I still needed a team of people to help and spring was approaching fast. After many hours of talking

to everyone I could think of, and beginning to get desperate, I eventually put together a team of tough and interesting people who would share this mini-adventure with me – just in time! The team mixture was good with some prospectors who could dive and some divers who would learn to prospect. Mike Gossage and Pete were in charge of the dive-boat, David Thurbottle, John Tewson, Charlie Field and Lorna were the divers, and Richard Blackwood (from Tasmania) and myself were the diver-prospectors. Individual team members had to fit the dives in with their other work and family commitments so we were never all on site at the same time – but I had a team and it worked.



Figure 1- Loading the Boat

Working the Seabed

One of my big surprises was how quickly we all got used to working in sewage. We immediately learned to keep our air supply regulators in our mouths at all times and, after losing my dive buddy a couple of times on the way down, we learned to hold hands as we sank through the two to three meters of surface 'soup' into the clearer water beneath. Once under the 'soup' it was fine and there was an abundance of fish, starfish, crabs and other sea wildlife – all come to feed in the rich waters!

It is easy to get lost amongst the slippery seaweed waving in the currents, so we laid out marker tapes from the base of the cliffs 10 meters out to sea. Each tape was named and had shore direction marks so that we always knew where we were. Now we were ready to look for the gold! Firstly I searched amongst the rocks and cobbles for samples of the precious gold-bearing vein material, in total I found seven pieces – none of which contained gold when gently etched with dilute hydrochloric acid. This was a disappointment as it was the ore that I really wanted, but

never mind, the seabed was full of big cracks that had collected heavy debris from shipwrecks, fisherman, the sewer and, we hoped, the gold veins. So we began to work the cracks, just as any prospector would work bedrock cracks in a river, except that we were weightless – which brings a new range of difficulties for a prospector! Again there were problems unique to this site, like having so many hypodermic needles settled into the cracks that we took great care before touching anything. But there were surprises too – like when we disturbed pockets of chopped toilet paper it floated around us like we were in a snowstorm, quite pretty really!

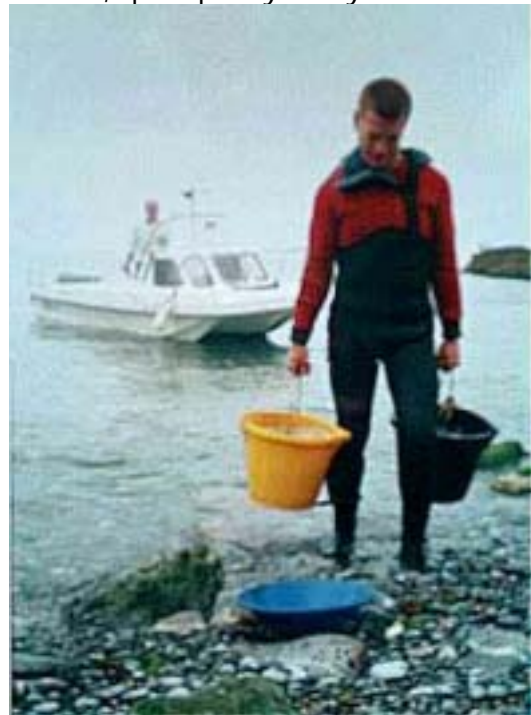


Figure 2 - David unloads buckets

We worked in pairs using iron bars to loosen the concreted concentrate and modified Henderson pumps to suck it out into buckets. We then used airbags to get the buckets to the surface and into the boat. After each dive we took the buckets of concentrate to a little stony beach where we had lunch and panned down the buckets of concentrate. Each pan was a real 'lucky dip' as we panned up coins, gold jewellery, and yes – tiny fragments of the rare Hope's Nose gold! But one dive in particular will remain fixed in my mind.



Figure 3 - Pan of concentrate

The Nugget

Towards the end of the trip Richard Blackwood joined me as dive buddy, as good a companion as I could have wished for. We had done a number of dives working along each seabed crack in turn when I saw a nuggety looking piece of gold about 5mm big. Colours were muted in the brownish light, but we had learned that if anything looked like gold on the seabed, when we got it to the surface and into daylight, it was gold! I got out my knife and tried to free the little nugget. A piece of crud broke away and I saw that the nugget was much bigger than I had first thought. I signalled to Richard to help me and not to touch the nugget with his knife, I wanted this beauty undamaged. We worked like silent surgeons for almost twenty minutes to get it out. Twenty minutes of pure joy as I thought we were freeing one of the best nuggets ever found in England.



Figure 4- The 'Nugget'

The nugget felt light, but was spongy and still had crud attached to it. I took it to a good friend who had access to university testing facilities. He studied it carefully in silence with a lens for a few minutes; I could see his excitement growing. We then photographed the nugget and he took a tiny fragment from it for testing. I drove home buzzing with excitement as I know that nuggets are seldom alone, they lay in 'families' so, if the test was positive, I knew I needed to get back and dive to find it's 'brothers and sisters'! Three very long days passed and then a call on my mobile phone, "Are you ready for this? He said, (long pause) "I'm afraid we got high copper and zinc readings." I was crushed – my gold coloured, nugget shaped, piece of metal, found in a gold vein – was brass!

So, we did find fragments of the little gold-palladium ferns, and earrings, watch chain and a diamond ring – but I'll never forget the false hope I felt for twenty minutes with Richard, deep down in the brown gloom, gently freeing our mysterious little nugget of brass. Such is life eh!

Vincent Thurkettle



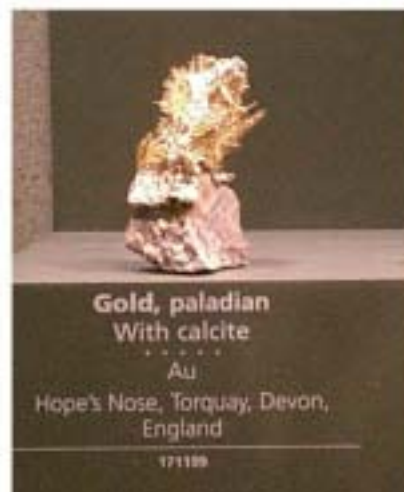
Figure 5 - Vince Finds Dinner

Editors note:



On a recent trip out to visit me in the USA, Vincent and I went to the Smithsonian Natural History Museum in Washington D.C. where of course, we saw the Gold exhibit! I was surprised to see they had very few samples from the world, most bringing from the USA,

however there was a beautiful example of Hope's Nose gold.



Dates for your Diary:

Czech and Slovak Republics, Open Chamionships. **20 to 22 June**

Kocaba River, 36 km, South of Prague

Information: Hodrussky klub zlatokopov. Web : <http://www.zlatokop.cz>

Swedish Contest. **5 to 6 July**

Kopparberg, Sweden

Information: Hans Prinselaar, Bangbrogarden, S-71400 Kopparberg. Tel.0580-12407

Email : hoj.prinselaar@swipnet.se

Another Swedish Contest ! **12 to 13 July**

Ullanger, Sweden Information: Anki Amberg, Viksäter 2550, S-87032 Ullanger (Tel/Fax 0613-10669) Email : miranatura@swipnet.se

Swedish Open, **25 to 27 July**

Lannavaara, Sweden

Information: Kristallen Stenslip, Box 60, S-98030 Lannavaara

Phone (0)981-31060, Fax (0)981-31037 Website : <http://www.kristallen.com> Email : info@kristallen.com

"Gold and Western 2003" (Poland) **August 2nd and 3rd**

Western City/Karpacz - SW Poland

Information: Krzysztof Maciejak/Polish Goldpanning Center. Website :

<http://www.goldcentrum.pl/kalendarz/indexWCeng.php3> Email: info@goldcentrum.pl

Austrian Open **August 9 and 10**

Rauris, Austria

Information: Austrian Goldpanning Association. Email : info@goldwaschen.at

*The
Golden Beer
of Lapland*

LAPIN
KULTA
OLUT

Golden Times

**The Official Newsletter of the World Goldpanning Association
ISSN 1238-0083**

Publisher: Kauko Launonen, FIN-99695 Tankavaara
Tel: +358-16-626158, Fax, +358-16-626261

Editor:

Paul Thurkettle USA 757-848-9070 FAX 757-445-3785 Email: thurkettle@hotmail.com
Address: 306 Riverside Dr, Hampton, VA, 23669 USA

Websites: <http://www.urova.fi/~kulta>
<http://www.worldgoldpanningassociation.org>