

# Golden Times

The official Newsletter of the  
World Goldpanning Association



New President and board elected  
Reports on Switzerland World Championships  
Royal Visit for the WGA President  
Future goldpanners and departed ones  
Much more inside...

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## **Golden Times**

Issue 22003

*Golden Times is the official newsletter of the World Goldpanning Association representing over 22 nations who share a love for Gold, Good companionship, Gold prospecting and good fair competitions both national and international.*

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### **Editorial:**



Hello!

I hope you like this issue of Golden Times. I must admit to feeling a little lonely being the only editor now. Certainly it has been a push to everybody to send me the articles and pictures.

I miss Kauko, Inkeri and Pirjo!

Still time goes on and I am building a team of helpers to make this newsletter better and better. I need roving reporters to send in articles and pictures, a member from each nation to become that nations point of contact for Golden Times. In this way I can ensure I get everything I need to publish the

newsletter and you get the best stories and information available. It was always Kauko's wish that we had lots of stories outside of the competitions and I hope to achieve that but I need your help!

When I have some time the web site and the format of Golden Times will change and improve (I hope you will agree!) I am missing lots of information on events in 2004, please make sure you send dates to me.

Please let me know if you can become one of my roving reporters or national contact.

All the very best wishes for the New Year!

Paul Thurkettle

## Message from the President, and '5+5'



I am so happy to be writing to you all now, this is exciting, I have so many thoughts and ideas! But firstly I would like to say a big thank you to all those of you who voted for me, I am grateful for your confidence. And to those who did not have me as first choice, I say please give me time, I will do my very best for everyone. As a Treasurer with your help we moved things forward, as a President with your help we can do so much more good work.

So, what are all my thoughts and ideas? Well, actually, right now it is your thoughts and ideas that I want to hear. I want the first job I do as the new President to be listening. I want to listen to each nation, to each prospector - I want to hear from all of you how you would like this great association of ours, the WGA, to develop over the next few years. I need your help in 'Finding the Way Forward'.

A friend of mine once taught me the saying, 'If you don't know where you're going, you probably will not get there!' We must work out where we want the WGA to go. Then we can work out how to get there.

So this '5+5' is my first listening exercise. It is simple, but will capture the most important thoughts about the WGA from all nations. Please think carefully and give me the 5 things that you like most about the WGA and the 5 things you dislike most. In this issue of *Golden Times* you will find the 5+5 form which I ask you to fill in and send back to me. I will coordinate all the replies that I receive and consider them with the full Council of National Representatives. I have, as you would expect of a new President, a thousand thoughts and ideas - but I want to work with you, slowly, sensibly and democratically to gently move us forward.

In this issue you will see the new board of the WGA: Veronika Stedra (Vice President), Arturo Ramella (Secretary), Esko Orava (Treasurer). I am so pleased to have three such good people to work with. But there is more. Perhaps the two most important things for the WGA at the moment are good competitions and good communications. I am so pleased to have Mike Gossage as Chairman of Rules and Competition, and to have Paul Thurkettle as Editor of *GT* and Communications. What an excellent team.

To build anything new we need good foundations and here I would like to formally record my respect for the foundations that Kauko Launonen has built. As a great and quiet leader he led the WGA from being a very small group of gold enthusiasts to a world-wide organisation that touches five of the world's six continents (forgetting Antarctica). Isn't that amazing!

And what is the sixth continent that we do not yet have contact with? Well I was thinking, perhaps we should ... whoops, I've started giving one of my ideas! Damn but this is going to be fun!



## Message from the Vice President

Hello dear gold panners.



So we had a great chance to see another lovely place in the Alpine footwall this year. The pleasant week spent in the township of Willisau brought an important moment for the World Goldpanning Association. We said thank you, Kauko, well done, and after his excellent 20 years in charge we elected a new president. The next step was to refresh the rest of the committee. All of you know, who is the new present, and I believe, that Arturo, Esko, myself and also Mike and Paul will make a single efficient body helping Vince in the main chair for the sake of common interests of WGA members. I was delighted and feeling happy that the representatives of member

countries granted gave me their voices in the election of the WGA Vice-President. Thank you all for your support and trust.

I would like to make a special offer to all of you who will travel by car or caravan through Central Bohemia in future years, perhaps on the way to Slovakia.

Merry and Peaceful Christmas and Golden New Year for all of you

Yours

Veronika Stedra,

Prague, Czech Republic, stedra@cgu.cz, +420 777 571 251

## WGA Secretary

It is my first time to occupy this Chair and I feel both proud and scared at the same time!

It is also not the custom in the Golden Times to have some words from the Secretary but I thought I should take the opportunity at least once.



First of all allow me to thank our former Secretary, Inkeri Syrjanen: I realized in Willisau what a huge job she had done when, just after the conclusion of the WGA meeting, she handed over to me that great pile of papers with the words "Have you got your car?". I didn't have my station wagon with me but in any case it would hardly have been big enough!

Next, I would like to say a few words about what I intend to do first in my new role: I want to "transform" all those paper documents into files and hand over to my successor a CD ROM containing every single file! My term of office will end in

September 2005 and I have no intention of flying to Pilgrim's Rest with 20 kg of paper as my entire luggage allowance!

Thank you everybody from the Member Countries who decided to give me this big challenge. But first, allow me to thank the "other" Italian delegation who, despite several years of "non-cooperation" on both sides, decided to support me in my bid for the Presidency. Grazie!

And if there is anyone with reservations about my suitability to be a Member of the Board..well, I have two whole years of work ahead to persuade him to change his mind.

Awaiting your contributions at: [arturo.ramella@libero.it](mailto:arturo.ramella@libero.it) ; Golden Greetings from Italy!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Arturo Ramella'.

## Arrivals and Departures



We are delighted to welcome 'Vilma Kanerva Muotkajärvi' to the goldpanners family! As you may have noticed in Switzerland, Pirjo had a rather large bump! She was born to Jouko and Pirjo on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October and is less than three weeks old in the photo. In her hand she has a replica of the gold nugget of 75 grams which her father (Jouko Korhonen) found couple of years ago. Her christening will take place at Christmas

**Congratulations to you both!!**

### **In Memoriam Yrjö "Bear"-Korhonen - The Legend of Gold Fields in Lemmenjoki (2.3.1922 – 20.10.2003)**



Yrjö Korhonen was one of the most legendary persons in the Finnish gold prospecting areas. He died a few weeks ago in Inari, in Finnish Lapland, and his loss was enormous for the people in Finland, and also to the Finnish gold history. Something special, perhaps a whole generation of gold prospectors disappeared with Yrjö Korhonen. He was known as a trustworthy, honest and silent man, who worked hard for his living.

Korhonen was born in Suonenjoki, in the middle of Finland, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March in 1922. He joined to the Finnish army as a 17-years young volunteer, and was wounded three times during the the World War II. Korhonen found his way to the Finnish Lapland in the year 1951. In Inari he heard about the gold recently found from Lemmenjoki-area. At first Yrjö Korhonen found his way to Kullervo Korhonen's claim on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May in 1951. He worked two years for Kullervo "Kone-Korhonen" (Machine-Korhonen), who used the excavator called Hullu-Jussi (Crazy-Jussi) in order to find gold near the bedrock.

Kullervo Korhonen continued gold prospecting in Jäkälä-Äytsi and Miessi-river area in 1952. Next year he gave Yrjö Korhonen a permission to prospect gold from the fractures and holes of the bedrock on his claim. Kullervo's excavator had already done the shovel-work for Yrjö. So, he started to crush the bedrock with the hammer and the pick, and then he cleaned the small rock-holes with the pump and hydraulic shower. The work was hard and dangerous when the water eroded the edges of several metres deep pits.

Yrjö got his first claim from Jäkälä-Äytsi in 1954, when he bought a claim next to Kullervo's claim with a riffle from Kokko-Erkki. Yrjö's brothers Heikki and Jalmari Korhonen joined to Yrjö's claim probably in 1954, but they didn't devote themselves to gold because they had their own winter sport equipment factory in Viiala. Yrjö actively prospected gold at the same claim until year 2003. Like this Yrjö Korhonen became one of the "life sentences" or "sour doughs" in Lapland as some other young men who came after the World War II to Lapland to prospect gold, and who stayed in the gold areas for the rest of their lives.

Yrjö got his nick-name Karhu-Korhonen (Bear-Korhonen), because he shot eight bears and many wolves, and caught also wolverines with trapping gears in Lemmenjoki-area. The story tells that during one winter he filmed himself as a bear rushed against him. People who have seen the film tell that Yrjö's hands didn't much shiver while he was shooting the film. At last the bear got nervous, it gave up and vanished. This story tells us about Yrjö's experience and ability to survive in Lapland's harsh and extreme conditions.

Two gold diggers from Lemmenjoki, Yrjö Korhonen and his friend Niilo "Nipa" Raumala, decided to make a claim over Tankavaara in 1969. They had started to sell guided gold panning for tourists already in Lemmenjoki in the 1960s. The world market price of gold had sunk already in the mid 1950's so much that the usual gold prospecting wasn't profitable anymore. So, the companions decided to move there where the tourists travelled. They carried out experiments to find gold in Tankavaara for one summertime to insure themselves that there really was gold in that area. After that they opened the first tourist gold panning centre in Finnish Lapland in 1970. Today the place is known as a Tankavaara's Gold Village.

Korhonen stayed in Tankavaara about ten years, meanwhile he saw and was developing the new beginning for the Finnish gold culture. He participated in creating the Gold Prospector Museum, the Gold Panning Championships and the dwelling-house for old gold diggers, for instance. But after all he returned back to the Jäkälä-Äytsi -area, where he had started digging. Yrjö travelled around Finland and around the world, and he attended many gold panning competitions and championships.

Yrjö Korhonen gradually became the most famous gold digger in Lapland and in Finland. Two years ago his life-work was rewarded, when he received Knight of the Order of the Lion of Finland from the President of Finland. Korhonen started his last journey to eternity by the Lake Inari, in Inari village, where his career actually began over 50 years ago. The last Legend of the Lapland's gold fields is gone.

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## **Invitation to the Czech Republic from Veronika!**

I would like to make a special offer to all of you who will travel by car or caravan through Central Bohemia in future years, perhaps on the way to Slovakia.

I have been a proud owner of an old and picturesque ruined mill. I am adjusting the place to create a small natural camp base with basic facilities necessary to have a short break during long travels through Europe.

It is still very rough and rotten, but far better now than it was when I was buying it a year ago. I have to admit that it could not happen without help of several friends found among you goldpanners from Bohemia and also from Germany, Australia and Poland. Just recently, during the first December weekend, a group of my friends tested successfully the hospitality and first opportunities of the place. In spite of freezing winter, we had a great time there; everything is going to be much easier in summer. I believe that you who will find a way to the small village of Mlékovice No. 18 near Zásmyky, 50 km SE from Prague on the way to Kutná Hora, will not regret it.

I would like to tell you I am looking forward to seeing you there, to share a day or more. We can have a chat, sitting by the fire or the stove, and not using only electronic media for our messages. The place has got a lot of ancient atmosphere; only it will certainly take some time to recover all its treasures. Of course, first of all, I would be extremely happy to invite all the members of the Golden Eagles team including the sixth member born in Finland just recently. Congratulations, Pirjö.

## **National Reports:**

### **WATCH THIS SPACE!**

#### **The South African National Gold Panning Championships 24 – 28 September 2003**

The South African National Gold Panning Championships was held in Pilgrim's Rest, 24 – 28 September 2003 – a month after the World Championships in Switzerland!! There was a lot of work to be done in a short time, as our Nationals were usually held in November and a long way from the annual World Champs, but somehow – as always, we managed to pull it through.

September, is spring in South Africa, but as we had very little rain, the country's scenery was still relatively drab comparing to the November months, but we were interested to see how favorable the conditions will be, in preparation for the World event in 2005.

The 2003 National Championships started on our national Heritage Day, and we were also celebrating Pilgrim's Rest's 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary (22 September 2003). As usual the program was packed with events to suit everyone's interests, and kicked off with geological tours, the gold panning school at the Diggings site Museum (where the championships took place), as well as a mineral market in the main street of the village.

The Pilgrim's Rest Museum initiated the gold panning school to promote gold panning amongst visitors and to encourage community participation in the event. Training sessions are held each Friday and the local schools are targeted in order to introduce them to this relatively new heritage concept, in South Africa. Closer to the championships the locals also practice regularly on Sundays and needless to say, the record times over the week-ends were always the topic of discussion on Monday mornings!

The street parade was "the best ever" according to the locals. A brass band was at the forefront of vintage vehicles, horse riders, the various teams and locals in digger's attire. Masses of balloons, the colour of the South African flag were released just as the Can-Can girls ("with legs up to Cairo") danced, as only

the Can-Can girls can! Patrick (who you met in Switzerland) organized the local traditional dancers, and the show was absolutely out of this world. It was already dark when the speeches were finished (but we remembered to organize proper lighting – for just in case)!

The Gold symposium on Friday attracted geologists and mineral enthusiasts from far and wide. Six papers covered topics from Ancient Gold Trade Routes in Africa, Gold and geology in the Pilgrim's Rest area and Legal aspects around Gold. The Transvaal Gold Mining Estates, the local operating mine in Pilgrim's Rest organized a guided tour through their Reduction plant.

The Wheelbarrow race, is part of the Pilgrim's Rest tradition, and 9 relay teams competed against each other, starting the 2 km distance in front of the Royal Hotel (up-town), turning at The Vine restaurant (Down-Town) and ending again at the Royal Hotel. Once again the TGME mine team proved to be the fittest and unbeatable champions! Afterward everyone joined in on the extremely popular Diggers Pup Crawl, visiting 10 local pubs.

The National Championships were held over 3 days (starting on Friday – Sunday). It is rapidly increasing in popularity, as the registration figures are showing: 294 participants entered in 2001, 366 has entered in 2002 and 537 in 2003 (171 more entrants than the previous year)!

The best overall winners were Mr Joseph Mashaka, (also the 2002 National champion), who also won the Proficient Men category and Miss Carmen Goodwin (Junior category). These two won return airfare plus R1000 each, to the World Gold Panning Championships, to be held in the Slovak Republic in August 2004. Both were awarded these prizes on merit. Ms. Marlene Stuart won the Proficient Ladies category.

We were extremely fortunate to have received sponsorships of return airfare to the 2004 World Gold Panning Championships to Slovak Republic for all the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> places (official categories, South Africans only) to the World Championships!



The 2003 National Gold Panning Championships in Pilgrim's Rest, was, once again an event to remember, and our only regret is that we had no international visitors, as in the previous years! So, save up and join

us in South Africa in 2005, it will be an experience that you will never forget!

Christine Rowe  
SAGPA: Chairperson

## Belgian Goldpanning championship

This was already the fourth edition of our national goldpanning championship organized by the AGAB



Concentration for the timers

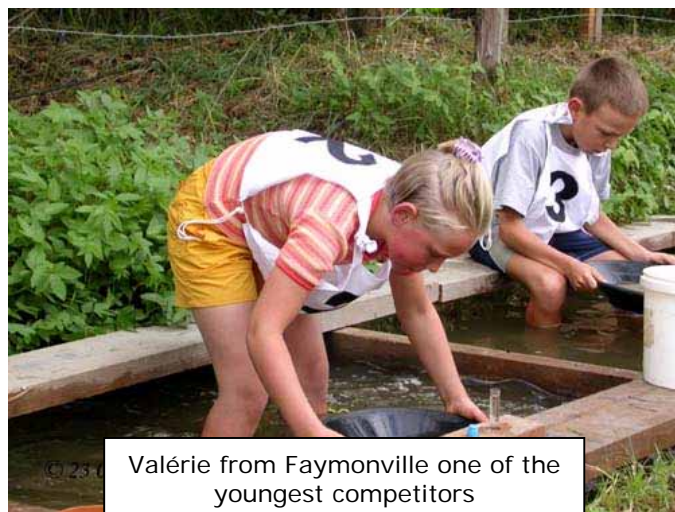
(Belgian Geological and Mineralogical Association) and the SI of Faymonville. It is the first time I write about it in golden times because I wanted to be sure the championship could be kept alive and be a good value for money before advertising for it. Indeed we started in 2000 with an exclusively Belgian edition and the terrible weather didn't discourage the brave competitors. The following year, we opened the competition to all countries and soon, we had an impressive participation of our German, Dutch and French friends. This of course tremendously raised the level of the competition and our poor Belgian competitors were "swallowed" by the foreign competitors. I thought that the championships would soon have to forget any Belgian participants but I was wrong and, they saw this as a challenge. Practicing more and more to equal the other nations.

This year proved to be the best since competitors came from 6 different countries and everybody competed with fair-play and great dexterity. The weather was also very good and it surely helped maintain a warm atmosphere.

Every year we want to surprise competitors with something new or interesting. Either by trying to

have good prizes (Metal detectors or nuggets from Madagascar for the last two years) or by creating new events to entertain the panners.

This year, although, I hesitated for a long time, we decided to organize a "beer-panning" competition. My hesitation came from the fact



Valérie from Faymonville one of the youngest competitors

that I didn't want to turn championship into a mockery. So we organized it Saturday evening as an entertainment.

The goal was to wash a bucket of sand and drink beer. We opted for half a liter to drink in the



Kids rushed for the nugget race

first round before putting the flakes in the tube. The selected competitors then went to the second round and had to drink another two beer again before isolating the flakes. Norbert Pister from Alsace (France) was the fastest. He washed his



gravel and drank his two beers in just above three minutes. Even faster than any best time of the qualifying heats during the day. The Germans of course got the second (Thomas Puschel) and the third (Robert Rolle) place. Then we duly celebrated their achievement with even more beer (Guess what Belgium is renowned for) and the evening ended late.



The prizes offered by the AGAB

But everybody was up for the semi-finals and the



Iris Welsh from Germany the best panner of the week-end

finals and we got the following results. I must also emphasize that Iris Welsh badly hurt her knee during the nugget race and still could finish first in the category skilled. (When you think that she didn't want to be in the skilled because she had just turned 16!!). This, to me, emphasizes that

equality between man and women, if you adapt the quantity of sand, is perfectly possible and they can pan together.

So all up a wonderful weekend thanks to all the enthusiastic goldpanners who had made it to Faymonville.

### Results

#### Juniors

- |                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| 1 BOVY Nicolas     | Belgium |
| 8.19               |         |
| 2 HANDIG Bart      | Belgium |
| 8.27               |         |
| 3. BERNARD Laurent | Belgium |
| 9.25               |         |

#### Beginners

- |                      |         |
|----------------------|---------|
| 1. HAMOIR Christiane | Belgium |
|----------------------|---------|



The skilled final

- |                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| 8.07                |         |
| 2. De BOER Cjestmir | NL      |
| 8.58                |         |
| 3. VANLERBERGHEJ.Y. | France  |
| 14.19               |         |
| <b>Skilled</b>      |         |
| 1 WELSH Iris        | Germany |
| 2.21                |         |
| 2. PIVA Liliane     | France  |
| 2.49                |         |
| 3. SPIYKER Job      | NL      |
| 3.23                |         |

Italy:

## IMPRESSIONS OF A FRIENDLY COMPETITION by Anthea Lacchia

I have to admit that it wasn't that easy for me to deal with the fact of winning a trophy that takes its name from that of the late Diego Rossetti.

I had never met him and therefore maybe I can't fully comprehend the significance of this prize. Everyone who met Diego says that one of his qualities was the love for young people so I hope he would be pleased to know that two beautiful trophies are now happily glimmering on my desk. It certainly was a memorable day!



We arrived early on Sunday morning with boots in our bags and tubes in our pockets and we merrily descended into the arena ready for the competition. "Take your place...get ready...GO!!!" The silence is intense as well as the cold of the water seeping over the tops of our boots!

But we, courageous and intrepid goldseekers, continue in our task with determination and enthusiasm and, finally...A spark, a shine ... Yes ! I've found some gold!

This was what we needed to brighten up our day and in a whole new perspective we make our way to the count. This is repeated four times in four different rounds and, in between,

we can finally eat a well- earned lunch cooked by our usual Golden Chef, Gigi ! At this point not even the rainstorm and hailstones can dampen our spirits. We are too happy to even notice!

And, of course, when something doesn't bother you, it goes away; and soon enough the sun came out... In the afternoon we walked to the nearby Gold Museum for the prize-giving ceremony and, in doing so, passed all the stalls put up in the little village of Vermogno on the occasion of the "Village Festival".

The prize-giving ceremony was very successful (at least for me !) and we all chattered our way back to the arena to our cars. Then, with our wet boots packed away and our glinting tubes in our pockets, we left, only to have a great memory of this occasion, which, I hope, will be repeated in the forthcoming years. **THANK YOU DIEGO !**



### Happy birthday!!

Giannino Rambaldelli

our elder teacher (the trulla-man" as you probably already know). We had a little party for his 77th birthday on October 5th at Victimula Goldpanners' Arena in Vermogno.

## Finland

Below is a short story about Pahtavaara gold mine in northern Finland which was reopened by the Swedish mining company ScanMining in November 2003

### PAHTAVAARA



During 2002 ScanMining reached agreement on the acquisition of the Pahtavaara gold mine in northern Finland. The acquisition comprises the Pahtavaara mine consisting of a complete and fully modern ore dressing plant, with mineral resources, which are close to the ore dressing plant and in the vicinity of the mine.

In May 2003 ScanMining decided to start preparatory operations for gold production at the Pahtavaara gold mine. An agreement on total financing was concluded with a consortium of industrial investors that supplied ScanMining with

risk capital totalling 35 million SEK.

The Pahtavaara mine is located some 25 kilometres north-west of Sodankylä in northern Finland. Mining was carried out between 1996 and 2000. In total, 3 300 kilos of gold was extracted.

At present in Pahtavaara there is an open-cast mine with proven reserves that can be mined, of 130 000 tonnes with 2.3 grams per tonne of gold. Drilling has additionally defined an indicated mineral resource of 851 000 tonnes with 4.8 grams per tonne of gold. The resource is accessible for underground mining and is not delimited either in length or depth. There is therefore great probability that known deposits will increase with continued exploration.

In October 2003 began the ore extracting at Pahtavaara Mine.

The Pahtavaara mine is also located in a geological region which has very great potential for gold mineralization. Apart from the actual mine and ore dressing plant, ScanMining has acquired a number of exploration licences in the vicinity of the mine. In one of these, Hirvilavanmaa, there is a gold zone with indicated mineral deposits of 110 000 tonnes with 2.9 grams per tonne of gold, and indications which show that mineralization continues both lengthways and downwards.

### The Pahtavaara Geology

The deposits are located in a rock sequence called the Central Lapland Greenstone Belt which mainly consists of komatiitic lavas, vulcanoclastic sediments and mafic metavulcanites. The ore lies in the contact zone between a komatiitic lava and vulcanoclastic rock.

The gold mineralization occur in a north-west, almost vertical, alteration zone. They are lens shaped, and striking east-west. They are between five and ten metres.

Geochemically, the mineralization are characterised by barium and manganese



anomalies. Concentration of gold within the zone of the altered rocks can be traced up to six kilometres towards west-north-west to northwest of the gold deposits.

Immediately next to the gold

deposits occurs an alteration zone with increased content of gold-barium-strontium-manganese.

The gold in Pahtavaara occurs almost exclusively as free gold between silicate mineral, carbonate, and baryte, but locally, gold can also be found as inclusions in magnetite.

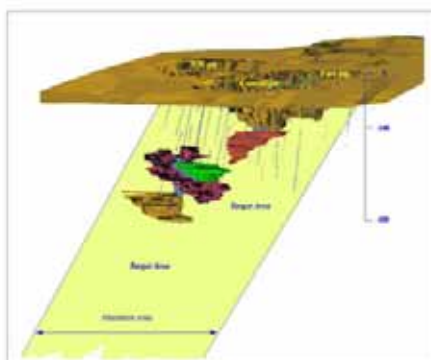
Visible gold can be seen with the naked eye in coarse-grained amphibole rock, together with veins of quartz baryte.

### Estimation of ore Reserves and Mineral Resources for Pahtavaara and Hirvilavanmaa

| <b>Pahtavaara</b>           | <b>Au (ppm)</b> | <b>Tonnage</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Proven Ore Reserve*         | 2.31            | 130,000        |
| Indicated Mineral Resource* | 4.98            | 851,000        |
|                             |                 |                |
| <b>Hirvilavanmaa</b>        | <b>Au (ppm)</b> | <b>Tonnage</b> |
| Indicated Mineral Resource  | 2.9             | 110,000        |

\* Proven Ore Resource in Pahtavaara is based on drilling in a 15x15 metre grid. The sample density for indicated mineral resources is 50x50 metres or better.

### Ore Resources Underground



View showing the central and northwest pit and the underground mineral resources. The gold ore occurs within the alteration zone.

### Pahtavaara Gold Mine, Plan Map

Plan map showing the open pit mineable ore potential marked with broken blue line and underground mineral resources marked in red. Unbroken blue line is marking the position of the mined ore.

## WGA Meeting and Election of new President

The World Goldpanning Association (WGA) held it's annual meeting in the town hall in Willisau with 33 representatives from 19 Nations.

Points from the meeting:

- World Championship 2006 to be held in Finland
- World Championship 2007 to be held in Canada.
- Changes to statutes of WGA to be postponed until meeting 2004
- Change unit of currency for WGA to EURO from Dollar
- Election of New Executive Committee

The five candidates for president gave a short speech outlining their experience and what they could achieve by being president. The five were then asked to leave the room and the national members voted on their nations choice.

Following the voting Vincent Therkettle was declared the new president. He thanked the group and stated he would do all in his power to prove as worthy a president as his predecessor.

Nominations for the other members of the executive committee were then voted upon with the end result:

President: Vincent Therkettle  
Vice Pres: . Veronika Stedra  
Secretary: Arturo Ramella  
Treasurer: Esko Orava

Great Britain  
Czech Republic  
Italy  
Finland

Presidential  
Candidates wait  
for the vote



Outgoing President gives Incoming  
President a golden gavel



New Executive Committee



## Reports from The 2003 World Goldpanning Championships

### Excursions

**Gold, cheese and alphorns**, we found all these in abundance (with the exception of gold that is) at the World Goldpanning Championships in Willisau, Switzerland. And it's not often we have cause to complain "it's too hot" at our championships, well there's a first for everything, and Tuesday the first day of the programme was no exception it was another glorious day with the sun high by 8am and already hot. With our bottles of water etc we assembled opposite the info centre in Willisau. As our names were checked off and we boarded the buses we were given our Emmantel-Napf souvenir bags containing sweets, biscuits and apple juice together with maps and general information about our destinations for the day.



Both buses got away on time and after a short drive through the historic town of Huttwil our first stop was at the Emmentaler Show Dairy Corporation's cheese factory reputed to be the birthplace of Swiss Emmentaler cheese. Inside we made our way to an overhead platform which enabled us to look down on men making cheese below, here we could see the stainless steel vats containing milk in various stages of the cheese process. Using the handsets we listened to audio commentaries about the whole process of cheese making in every language. In the dairy shop I tasted cheeses ranging from mild to very strong, much different to the ones I am used to in the UK. If we'd had more time I would certainly have indulged in one of the many tempting specialities in the pastry shop. Outside we looked at a restored herdsman's cottage dating from 1741, it was very tiny and I tried to imagine what it would be like

living there with a family of five. By prior arrangement you could even make your own cheese over the open fire at one end of the main room, would it be smoked cheese I wondered?



John A. Sutter

Back on the bus and a short drive to Burgdorf, the driver dropping us on the edge of the town centre where we met our guide who took us on our tour. We traced J.A. Sutter's early life here, together with his wife and five children he lived and worked in these houses and shops before he set out to America to make a name for himself at the now famous Sutter Sawmill in Coloma, California. Then came the hefty climb up lots of steps as we made our way to the top of the hill where Burgdorf castle towered above the town. We looked down on the town and river below us before we went inside the castle to the Helvetic Gold Museum, and although it was quite a small museum there were lots of really nice gold samples on display.

After our visit to the museum it was down hill all the way via more steps - we made our way to the riverside for a very enjoyable lunch then off to the river for some panning. There a circle of gold pans were laid out around a huge mound of sand and when the gun went off we grabbed a pan filled it with sand from the mound dashed to the river to pan it out. Most of us found gold some more than others and some found tokens which were exchanged for prizes, there was just enough time for a beer under the shade of the trees before we headed back to the bus.

The next part of our journey took us over lots of lovely old wooden bridges spanning rivers and streams. We passed chocolate box Swiss farms and villages saw lots of cows with their various sized bells and even managed to catch glimpses of mountains along the winding roads. Then we came to a small Alphorn manufacturer where we made our final stop, they entertained us with a musical performance then explained how the alphorns are



made. Taking lengths of wood from the forest and using hand tools, lots of time and patience before turning it into the long smooth sleek and decorated long horns we all recognise. To conclude they played for us again, and the mellow sounds were this time accompanied by three local people whose yodelling echoed through the valley. Some of the goldpanners even tried their hand at horn blowing and strange noises came forth but it was all good fun. Then it was back to the bus for the last part

of the journey via Marbach and Escholz matt and lots more spectacular scenery.

In spite of the heat everyone enjoyed an interesting and well organised day, and a big thanks went to the organisers who were on hand at all times with liquid refreshments throughout the exceptionally hot day, well done one and all.

**Barbara Copley - British Goldpanning Association**

## The World Goldpanning Championships 2003 in a retrospective view by the organizers

**By Victor Jans and Fritz Grundbacher**

The WGC feeling began on the weekend of 9th/10th. 65 members of the Swiss Goldprospectors Association followed the call to participate in an association championship. This championship should be the ultimate test of the WGC infrastructure. A handful of Czech and Slovaks around Josef Rezný and Ladislav Kolbaba gave this championship the international flair and were the benchmark for the Swiss goldpanners. Helena Rezná won the Ladies' category, but the first place of the Men category belonged to Swiss Toni Bichsel. Second place was Yannick Deriaz, a Swiss youngster that went straight into the Swiss national team with this performance.



Fritz Grundbacher (left), responsible for competition in the organization committee of the WGC 2003 and Kauko Launonen, former president of the WGA for 18 years.

The registration office opened on Monday afternoon. About 400 persons pre-registered by Internet or snail mail. On Tuesday and Wednesday we began to realize that the old rule known from Swiss National Championships was also valid for this WGC: 2/3 of the participants register ahead, 1/3 register on site. A bus from Poland and one from Spain raised the total number of competitors and we were able to welcome an incredible 607 persons from 22 nations in Willisau, Switzerland. Thank you all for coming! This number represents the competitors on site (no double counting of Veterans). A "night

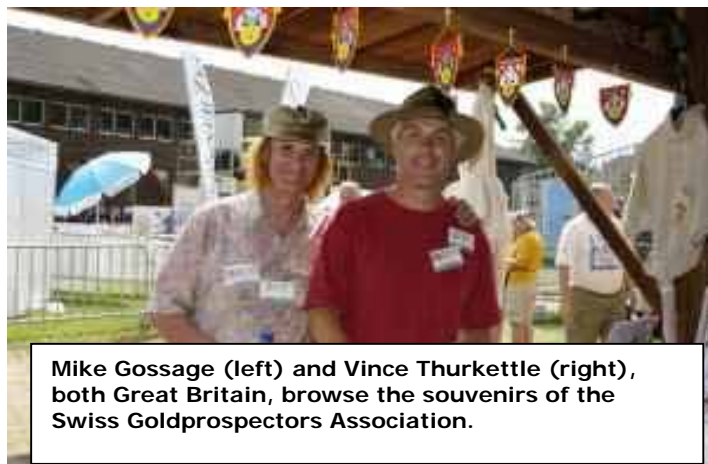
exercise" started for the organizers after the registration office had closed at 10pm on Wednesday evening. The starting lists had to be produced. We needed 12 elimination heats for the 358 Men, 6-quarter finals for the 180 Ladies, 2 semi-finals for the 60 Youth and 4 quarter-finals for the 99 Veterans. The hardest of all WGA rules had to be applied for the Men and Ladies categories: Only one third of the competitors were able to qualify after the first heat.

Tuesday and Wednesday were excursion days under the guidance of Marlise Luedi. The Bernese Napf area (Burgdorf, gold museum) was explored on Tuesday and the Lucerne Napf area on Wednesday. Enough time was reserved for goldpanning and for Swiss culture (cheese diary, Alphorn manufactory, carcoal burning, etc.).

On Thursday the Open-Team-2 and Open-Team5-elimination heats started. Now it was time to work for everybody of the 60 members of the Swiss Goldprospectors Association that helped to run the WGC: Fill the buckets with sand, hand out and recollect the starting numbers, count the gold flakes, supervise the

pools, etc. Not only the Swiss worked, but also the WGA. Mike Gossage of the Rules Committee instructed with his strong voice all the goldpanners before every heat. Nevertheless some of them forgot to put the cap on their tube - a reason for disqualification. Once or twice the Jury had to come together, i.e. to decide whether gold pans may be prepared with soft soap against the natural (or sun creamy artificial) oil film on the water surface.

On Thursday evening a Gold symposium about the gold occurrences of Switzerland was hold in the town hall of Willisau. Peter Pfander explained the history of the gold of the Napf, Thomas Pettke of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich spoke about the genesis and research of gold quartz veins in the Alps und Beda Hofmann of the University of Bern showed how the huge lode gold find of the Val Somvix in the year Jahr 2000 was cleaned and prepared. The visitors of the Gold symposium got a free copy of our Goldwäscherzytig-special edition with the text of the lectures.



Mike Gossage (left) and Vince Thurkettle (right), both Great Britain, browse the souvenirs of the Swiss Goldprospectors Association.

On Friday 22 nations joined to form the traditional WGA-parade after the competition in the old town of Willisau. In the front of the nations 22 local cars paraded. We were all impressed of the old tractors, the Alphorns, the flags, etc. and much more of the colourful costumes of the 22 nations. The parade ended in the big hall where the evening continued with Swiss culture.



Jouko Korhonen, the world champion 2003 from Finland

Saturday was the day of the quarterfinals and in the evening Valérie Joy and her band played. Slovakia announced the WGC 2004 with a tombola. Finland "took it all" in the Sunday finals. The inventors of the WGC's were present with 69 competitors and were (except of the Swiss with 99) the largest delegation, followed by France (69) and Poland (67). We congratulate the Lady world champion Pirkko Mäenpää and the Men's world champion Jouko Korhonen. For both it is the first time to be world champion and both are from Finland. The following "qualification-patterns" of the first

ranks shows that these people proved an enormous continuity during all the heats:

The numbers in the following tables mean: first numbers=minutes and seconds; number after the slash=lost flakes

| Event                     | Final | 1/2 Final | 1/4 Final | 1/8 Final |
|---------------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Damen</b>              |       |           |           |           |
| - Mäenpää Pirkko Finland  | 2'36" | 4'30"     | 4'58"     |           |
| - Räisänen Anita Finland  | 3'01" | 5'18"     | 7' 41"    |           |
| - Keränen Maija Finland   | 3' 20 | 5' 39     | 5' 51     |           |
| <b>Herren</b>             |       |           |           |           |
| - Korhonen Jouko Finland  | 1'59" | 4'06"     | 4'06"     | 5'01"     |
| - Beyer Georges Australia | 2'59" | 6'02"     | 5'47"     | 5'17"     |

|                        |       |       |       |       |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| - Syrjälä Auvo Finland | 3'08" | 4'41" | 5'22" | 5'00" |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|

To sum it up: Know your pan and technique and work carefully but in time your steady way to the final! The WGC 2003 memorial website <http://www.goldwaschen.ch/gold2003> has all result lists (including elimination heats) available and many more photos. Have a look at it!

#### Video about the WGC 2003

There is a video/DVD about the WGC 2003 available now. Please order by wire transfer on Swiss Post account no. 60-41-2 (Luzerner Kantonalbank in favor of account 01-01-508959-04 Artillerieverein Willisau, Goldwaschen WM 2003).

- Video VHS, sfr. 35.--, including postage
- DVD, sfr. 42.--, including postage

Please indicate clearly your address on the wire transfer and add "Video" or "DVD" as reason for payment. Thank you.

#### Photo CD

A CD with 222 photos (format JPG) of the Swiss photographer Willi Luedi about the WGC 2003 (parade, elimination heats, final winners) is available for Euro 10.00 in cash sent in a envelope (including a self addressed envelope) to

Victor Jans, Veilchenstr. 15a, CH-6010 Kriens

There is also the whole Swiss Goldprospectors Website ([www.goldwaschen.ch](http://www.goldwaschen.ch), mostly in German) available on that CD. So you can surf through the WGC-result lists or the Goldwäscherzytig-archive (1989-2003, in German) without paying charges for the internet access.

### Of cheese, heat and good competition

The 2003 World Goldpanning Championships were held in Willisau, Switzerland. Willisau is well located for travel and many goldpanners arrived in their own cars or travelled in from the main airports, which were only a short distance away. I had booked a bed and breakfast using the excellent support team that



the Swiss Goldpanners team had organised. On arrival at the visitors centre, our landlady came to meet us and we were settled in. The goldpanning area and camping were located in the town, which made for short walks but made life a little unpleasant for the locals that lived by the event!

Registration was fast and efficient and we started meeting old friends and family immediately. The weather for the week was amazing for Europe, heat sun and more heat. But as in all World Goldpanning events the weather waited for the weekend and created mud and the odd heavy shower.

The first few days we travelled around panning in the rivers, no one had a lot of gold to show for their efforts but at least they had colour. Bruno even managed to find a little light refreshment in the river, cooked to perfection! As more and more people arrived it looked to be a very well attended event and we looked forward to the competition. One of the problems of being in the town is goldpanners by nature like fires, singing and sometimes-loud company. Unfortunately the locals did not and this caused some frustration for all. One evening walking up the hill we heard the Polish singing in their camp and joined them making noise where no one was complaining!





The competition opened on the Thursday straight into heats which for the men's professional category a very hard cut of only 1/3 to go through.

With the help of Mike Gossage and his rules team as well as excellent organisation from the Swiss the competitions went well with the minimum of protests or delays. Some times were changed which led to confusion but overall it went very well. The layout was good with timers, judges, spectators and the commentator having a good view of the competitors.

The social tent and town hall was large and well attended, with food vans and drinks close by which although costly were good quality.



On the Friday the official precession took place which it soon became apparent was not the normal goldpanning event. The whole town were celebrating an occasion of their own and we part of it.

At one point we wondered who was here to see who, but after watching a fascinating line of tractors, Swiss Pipes, bands and floats we joined the end and marched to the big tent and hall for a evening of Swiss Culture.



We moved forward into the weekend and the competition heated up, the heats moved on to the finals. Even though we had a large gathering the spectator's benches were often empty and quiet with the tent being the favourite place to be. The Saturday night dinner was fun with many of us playing a home version of **Shove Ha'Penny**, while the band played on.

The Spanish as ever provided unplanned entertainment as we danced to the pipe music and drank wine poured from great distances!



Sunday proved the Finns were still very good at panning with them taking most of the awards. Ken and Ula now have competition with another married couple as Pirjo and Jouko took men's and ladies trophies. The closing ceremonies seem to have a problem and as we waited and waited the crowd finally starting chanting and eventually the event started. The awards were given and then to my dismay the crowd moved off to the beer tent, this year is a huge change to the WGA and Vincent the new president had a speech honouring Kauko as well as the passing of the flag to Slovakia. With the same happening in Japan, I feel more thought should be given to the closing events and we the audience should plan to be there! All in all the Swiss did us proud, we did not get the Swiss clockwork efficiency we were expecting but we did the prices! A very relieved Fritz handed the Flag to Slovakia and for the first time in a week looked relaxed!

**Well done to the Swiss Prospecting Association and to the town of Willisau**  
Paul Thurkettle



## World Goldpanning Championship 2004 in Slovakia

In the club room of the Slovakian Goldpanning Association in Hodruša is exhibited the flag of the WGA. We received it as a "relay butt" from the organisers of the World Goldpanning Championship 2003 in Willisau - Switzerland. It is a reminder that the World Championship 2004 is approaching. The effort of Slovakian goldpanners, which has lasted for several years, is coming to its final end.

We realised, during the European Championship 1998, the Hodruša valley was too narrow for the events like the world championship. We have not needed to go far. We are sure the locality called Revištské Podzámčie - Žarnovica is more than suitable for it. It is in an attractive environment, on the bank of gold - bearing river Hron. It is well accessible by both road and railway, and 65 km from the Airport Sliač. The area is large enough for establishing of all necessary objects serving the WGCh. The village is situated under the ruins of the mediaeval castle Revište, and approximately, in the centre of the Middle Slovakian mining region, where gold, silver, copper, and iron had been won since the time unknown. Unfortunately, the Rozália mine in nearby Hodruša is the last active mine in this region, and probably Central Europe at large.



What program have we prepared? It has been divided into two independent parts. The competitions in goldpanning will be preceded by two packages of excursions. The first one "Looking for gold in Transylvania" is a bus excursion on August 10 - 14-th. To the well known European gold producing region called "Golden quadrangle" with the centre in Brad - Romania. The participants will visit active gold mines Barza and Rosia Montana, museum of gold in Brad, open air exhibition in Rosia Montana, and try goldpanning in gold bearing river Aries. Visit of an underground salt mine Praid is

also under arrangement. The second package will be oriented to getting acquainted with the most important localities of recent production of gold silver and copper in Central Slovakia. The busses will start from Revištské Podzámčie. These six excursions will take place between August 13 - 18-th. Free goldpanning will also be possible on several nearby localities. The very competitions will take place on August 19 - 22nd on the bank of Hron river. Except for the official categories of juniors, veterans, women, men and national teams, those of children, women and men beginners, teams of 2,3,5 members will also take place. Organisers are preparing different free competitions for which we recommend to bring not only the pans, but sluices as well. Several other interesting programs will be organised during the championship.

There will be several kinds of accommodation. Majority of participants will camp in their own tents or caravans right in Revištské Podzámčie, several hundred meters from the venue. Scouts tents for two will also be available, and only your own sleeping bags will be needed. The total capacity of these tents will be

50 beds. Back- packers accommodation will be within 8 km and hotel 10 km from the venue. Hotel accommodation should be booked beforehand and it will also require advance payment.

In comparison with the Western Europe, Slovakia can be considered as relatively cheap country. Only Slovakian Crowns [SkK] are accepted for payment, and the present exchange rate fluctuates around 41 Crowns for one Euro. For instance 1 kg of bread is around 25 SkK, 1 l of milk 16 - 20 SkK, bottled beer [0.5 l] 12 - 20 SkK, draught beer around 25 SkK, meal in the restaurant 70 - 200 SkK.

The propagation of materials and application forms in Slovak, German and English language were available at the Championship of Czech and Slovak Republics 2003, Austrian Championship 2003, and World Championship 2003 in Willisau. We have also prepared guidebook, posters, and stickers; however, the interest in Willisau was quite small. Especially the guidebook could be very useful for each participant. Essential information could be also obtained on [www.goldpanning.sk](http://www.goldpanning.sk) ,or [www.goldprospectors.sk](http://www.goldprospectors.sk) , and on e-mail address [slovenskabanska@bb.telecom.sk](mailto:slovenskabanska@bb.telecom.sk) ,where the application can be sent. For this purpose also the fax +421 45 6844633 can be used.

In the name of Slovakian Goldpanning Association I am looking forward to your participation in WG Championships in 2004 . **Welcome in Slovakia!**

**Richard Kaňa II**  
Vice-president of SGA  
organiser of WG 2004

Chief

Your Article here!!!

Please send us what you or your group have been doing. All articles are interesting...

We need dates of your events to make the international calendar

Please send anything you have for the next edition of Golden Times to [thurkettle@hotmail.com](mailto:thurkettle@hotmail.com)



Australia has new Gold rush! From Anne &amp; Henry Doran

# Mystery surrounds latest Dunolly nugget discovery

M/A 17.10.2003

By Shandelle Wood

Gold fever has hit Dunolly, with speculation surrounding the town over the discovery of a gold nugget weighing between 100 and 500 ounces.

There are conflicting reports about the size of the nugget and the place of its discovery, with some sources saying it was discovered by a prospector in the piles of earth dug by the sewerage contractors currently working in the town.

Owner of the Dunolly Railway Hotel, Drina Andrews, said although she had not seen the nugget, there had been talk of its discovery.

"A few people have commented that a large nugget in the vicinity of 130 ounces was found in the bush just recently," Mrs Andrews said.

"It follows a discovery of quite a few nuggets recently.

"People have been prospecting in the mounds of dirt left by sewerage contractors late at night," she said.

A local prospector, who wished to remain anonymous, confirmed a nugget had been found in earth piles in the town.

"It is unlikely the person who found the nugget would ever come forward particularly if it was as big as 500 ounces," he said.

A nugget of that size would have a value of more than \$250,000.

Sewerage works supervisor, Mike Scanlon, had also heard stories about the nugget.

"We have knowledge of people searching through what we have dug up," he said.

"When we arrive at our sites each morning, you can tell people have been sifting through the mounds.

"But it is a very dangerous

endeavour to be near such deep holes."

Prospectors with current miners rights are entitled to search for minerals on Crown land that is not exempted under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 or covered by a Mining License.

According to Central Goldfields Shire planner, Norm Cameron, nature strips are considered a part of road reserves and are only managed by council, making them, technically, Crown Land.

Under the terms of the Miners Rights, miners are also required to repair any damage to the land arising from the search.

Maryborough Advertiser 17.10.2003

## Prospectors rush to shire to strike it rich

Central Goldfields Shire is experiencing an influx of gold prospectors and miners, according to Tony Mills, Central Victorian Branch representative of the Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria.

In an article in the latest edition of the *Eureka Echo*, Mr Mills told of the new faces appearing at their meetings.

"In the past months the number of gold prospectors moving from Mel-

bourne and interstate to live in the central goldfields region has been extraordinary," he said.

Mr Mills, an employee of Coiltek Gold Centre, said calls from prospectors looking for land are becoming frequent.

"We have been answering numerous phone calls from people outside the shire enquiring about land for sale," he said.

"It's quite a boom for the area."

## GOLD, GOLD, GOLD

Dunolly seems to be on the verge of another "Gold Rush". Various reports from well-known business identities have confirmed at least smaller finds within 5 kms of Dunolly township. The sewerage installation has certainly triggered a dedicated following of metal detecting. Some of this ground must surely be virgin soil and hold promise.

As with the 1800s, usually the real gold was found as the town developed and, as tourism is always welcome, any new gold interest will benefit us all.

N.R. 24.10.2003

Welcome Record.

## Gold nugget unearthed

A 158-OUNCE gold nugget has been found by a prospector in Victoria's central goldfields north of Maryborough.

The man found the nugget, valued at more than \$200,000, using a gold detector four weeks ago.

The Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria confirmed the discovery and said it was found with smaller pieces, which in total are believed to amount to more than 300 ounces.

It is believed the 158-ounce specimen will be profiled in a trade magazine.

Prospector Tony Mills, who spoke to the lucky finder, described him as a

Mark Dunn H/S 13.11.2003

long-term digger who had enjoyed some good fortune over the years.

"He's pretty secretive, he has got other bits there that were good lumps," Mr Mills said.

The discovery comes after a 500-ounce gold nugget was found in sewerage diggings at Dunolly last month.

Museum Victoria geoscience curator Bill Birch said he would like to catalogue the latest find. "Anything over 100 ounces is worth recording for historical reasons," Dr Birch said.

Herald-Sun 13.11.2003

## Spain Royal Visit in Navelgas



The locality of Navelgas has been granted the "Exemplary Village of Asturias 2003" reward; a "Prince of Asturias" prize, the most important prize awarded in Spain.

It is the heir to the Spanish Crown, His Royal Majesty Prince Felipe de Borbón, who follows the long tradition of handing out the prizes in person. This prize has been granted to the inhabitants of Navelgas for their continuous fight for the conservation and defense of nature, traditions and folklore and, above all, the promotion of gold panning as an alternative to an adventure- seeking tourism.

His Royal Majesty enjoyed an unforgettable day: he witnessed various farming techniques, played bowling and panned for gold with the members of the Barciaecus Association, the Sanfiz family who proudly showed His Majesty the technique, Pedro Queipo, the president of the Spanish association and the president of the World Gold Panning Association (WGA) Mr. Vincent Thurkettle.

During the opening speech His Royal Majesty was



invited to accept the presidency of Honour for the European Gold panning Championship in 2005, an issue still pending decision.

When Spain was honoured with the nomination to host the 2005 European Gold Panning Championship in Hamatonbetsu, we promised to take the news to the regional government of Asturias as well as the National government. We have fulfilled our promise

and have taken the news even further; as far as The Royal Palace.

Amongst the important people accompanying His Royal majesty at the prize giving ceremony we can mention Mr Vicente Alvarez Areces, President of the Principality of Asturias, Mr Francisco Alvarez Cascos, National Minister of Fomentation, Ms Mercedes Alvarez Fernandez, delegate of the government in Asturias and other authorities.



The media quickly spread the news to the rest of the world: TV channels, National newspapers, and weekly periodicals. To everybody's surprise, the news had even more repercussions than expected when a week after the visit His Majesty announced his engagement to a young Asturian journalist who was attending the Prince of Asturias prize giving ceremony as correspondent of Spanish Television.



This prize and the presence of His Royal Majesty in Navelgas has been very important for the promotion of gold panning in Spain and many other Spanish speaking places. As a sign of gratitude Navelgas has offered the future Royal couple the gold from its river for the manufacturing of their wedding rings.

Certainly, for those who attended the ceremony it constitutes the best of the memories thanks to the Prince's kindness and the hospitality of the village. Everything for the better future of gold

panning in the world.

Manuel Garcia Linares

From the president of the WGA



*"Navelgas is beautiful and the perfect place to show a prince how to pan for gold. I was so impressed by the good organisation for the royal visit and that everybody seemed so happy and really enjoying this very special day."*



## What means cyanide leaching for gold extraction?

By Peter Ossenkopf (Freiberg/Sa.)

After having investigated a gold deposit near Kasperske Hory (Bergreichenstein) in the Czech Republic, the subsidiary of a Canadian firm planned to mine the deposit. Because of the fine granulation of the gold within the ore, the firm planned to extract it by leaching it with cyanide. The remainder of the process would have been deposited at an hazardous waste site in the Goldbachtal. However, the environmental party "Die Grünen" and the residents of the region had prevented the plans.

Why is the process of cyanide leaching so dangerous?

The substance used for the leaching procedure is sodium cyanide (NaCN). The name of this substance already reminds of the toxic substance potassium cyanide (KCN). Both are salts of the very toxic prussic acid (HCN). Therefore, the procedure usually is conducted in sealed vessels under high safety arrangements. The procedure of cyanide leaching has already been known for about one hundred years. Currently, over fifty percent of the entire world production in gold mining is gained by cyanide leaching.

The procedure is conducted as follows: At first, the ore in which the gold is finely spread, is ground to a grit size of under 0.1 mm. In huge vessels, the mashed ore is mixed with sodium hydroxide to reach a pH-value of 10 to 11. Then, the mash is mixed with sodium cyanide (more rarely with calcium cyanide) to dissolve about ninety to ninety-five percent of the spread gold out of the stone by forming a gold-cyanide complex. This step occurs at a low oxygen supply level. For the leaching in vessels without a rabble, the grind does not have to be conducted that far, but the output reaches only approximately seventy to eighty percent and lasts almost four times as long as the leaching in vessels with rabble (approximately four days). The results of a pile leaching are even worse. By this procedure, the solution is trickled over an ore pile. The output is only about fifty to sixty percent and the whole procedure takes about five weeks. After the leaching, the auriferous liquid is separated from the stone mash. The liquid releases the gold over zinc dust or the adsorption on activated carbon. The remaining stone mash still contains some cyanide. This is the reason why cyanide leaching holds a high risk.

In Baia Mare (Romania), it happened that the wall of a hazardous waste site with residual cyanide broke and the mud with the highly toxic water flowed into the river Theiß and destroyed the entire crop of fish. Even the ground water under the riverbank was contaminated. This disaster shows that it is essential to transform the cyanide before depositing the remainder of the leaching process. This can be conducted by adding an oxidant, which transforms the cyanide into the innocuous sodium, nitrogen, and carbon oxide. This procedure is quite expensive but it is the only way to avoid the risk of damaging the environment. Despite of all research done so far, no other more efficient, and less dangerous procedure of leaching gold has been discovered yet. The separation of gold by gravity ("Gold panning") or by flotation succeeds only if the gold particles within the ore are coarse. These procedures are usually conducted before leaching.

The exploration of a gold deposit is usually financed by loans. Meanwhile, the World Bank only grants such loans if the "World bank standards" for the after-treatment of the leaching remainder are fulfilled. According to estimations, only thirty-five to forty percent of the world gold production is conducted according to western standards. The residue of such an after-treatment is not that toxic anymore but the waste sites still damage the landscape. Hopefully, opportunities will be found to fill the stone mash back into the mines or for instance to use the stone mash as building material.

## A confusing report about the expedition to the Czech-Moravian Highland, September 2003

photo and text Ivan Synek, Czech Goldpanning Club



Morning mist and September sunshine in the Czech-Moravian Highland. The highland, it is the destination of a weekend expedition of several members of the Czech Goldpanning Club. One of them has a weekend house there, so they want to prove gold occurrence in one local brook



Action. Brook. What are they doing there ? Are they seeking something ? What ?

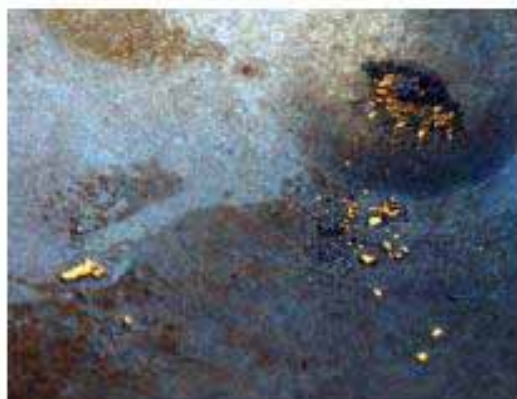


And what is this ? Is it any tower for drying fire-hoses ? Or is it anything else ?



Does the gold brook release its treasure ?

It is certain: gold.



Almost two pounds of gold. Almost. Those who lingered are pleased.

You can find other stories on the website of the Czech Goldpanning Club on [www.zlatokop.cz/CKZ/](http://www.zlatokop.cz/CKZ/)

## RAMBA : A ROMANIAN JOURNEY

Through my book which was kindly placed on the website

[http://utenti.tripod.it/goldprospecting/libri\\_v.html](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 a 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 northeast 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.

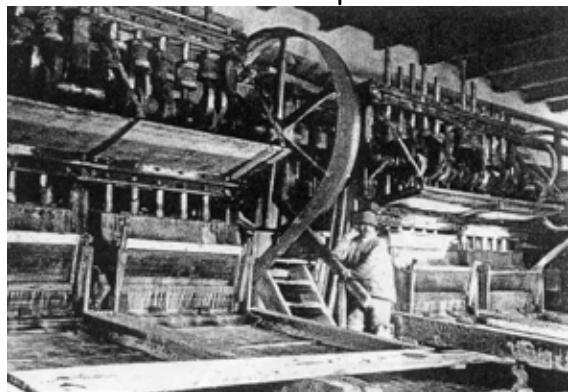
A right turn at the next crossroads takes you to Rosia Montana. It must immediately be reported that we found no gold here but how immense was our joy on discovering the history of this interesting locality.



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.



## Finding the Way Forward

### ‘5 + 5’

The WGA has come a very long way over the last ten years, but where are we going now? This is your chance to say what you think we should do and help to guide the WGA’s development over the next ten years. I will take all your ideas and, together with the Council of National Representatives, will forge a vision for the WGA over the next ten years. The vision will say where we want to take our association and what we want it to be. When we know where we are going, we can plan how to get there!

So, to start this process please give me the five things you like most about the WGA, and the five things you dislike most! This will give the WGA Board the main priorities. I would like any other ideas you have too, these will also help to guide us. Replies by the end of February 2004 please.

Five things you **like** most:

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2. ....  
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3. ....  
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4. ....  
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5. ....  
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Five things you **dislike** most:

1. ....  
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2. ....  
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3. ....  
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4. ....  
.....
5. ....  
.....

Other Thoughts and Ideas:

Please send your completed form to:

Mr V Thurkettle, Briar Dene, Shropham Road, Great Hockham, Thetford, IP24 1NL, England or by email to:  
vince.thurkettle@forestry.gsi.gov.uk