

THE MAGAZINE  
OF THE  
WORLD  
GOLDpanning  
ASSOCIATION

# Golden Times

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### **From the Editor ...**

Welcome to our spring edition of 2009! Having just returned from my niece Daisy's wedding in Scotland, I am reminded of the friendships our community grows and the longevity of our relationships. Daisy started goldpanning at the age of 5 attending and befriending goldpanners from around the world. Now in her mid twenty's she still attends championships and was honoured when panners from the world came to her special event. It is lovely when you can fly thousands of miles, go to a strange town or city and instantly know four hundred people!

This year will bring changes to our association with a new president and members of the executive committee. Our thanks go to Vince for his leadership and we look forward to supporting our next president as well.

Golden Times is our magazine that spans all our nations and organisations, along with the WGA website it provides contacts and stories from the World as well as providing dates of competitions and events. As ever, we rely on you to provide us your adventures and events, otherwise GT will become a very thin publication!

See you in Italy!

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



### **Message from the President**

Well, the last six years have gone past very quickly. My time as the WGA President is nearly over, I have enjoyed it hugely and hope that I have made at least a little progress with you all in making our sport and passion a world-class event. It has been a great honour and I thank all of you who've helped me over the years.



Last year I found some very beautiful gold and made some wonderful new friends and this set me thinking. If

we firstly consider gold; it is timeless, beautiful, durable, won't let you down, and a joy to find and hold. Now consider my friends and your friends in the world of gold prospecting - they are timeless, beautiful people, durable friends, they won't let you down, and they are a joy to meet up with, hug and hear all their news over a cup of tea, or more likely, some beer! So you see, like pets and their owners, we have become like the very gold we seek.

And what about our work and achievements over the last six years. A huge amount of progress has been made in ensuring the development of new and exciting gold pan designs while still safeguarding our traditions and the classic gold pan

designs. We have also thought very hard about how the competitions should run to make sure that the panners are involved in the competition for as long as possible. That seems to be a really important point, people enjoy competing and they want to do lots! And our communications are really excellent now. Golden Times is a joy to read, the website is the world's number one portal to contact national gold associations. We have also updated and clarified our rules and statutes. We have achieved a great deal, but of course there is always more. I wanted to explore linking the WGA closer to universities and professional people or companies with a specific interest in geology, mineralogy and the occurrence of natural gold - but my time is up, somebody else will have to do that if they want to.

So now we have the job of choosing the next president in Italy, there are so many good people to choose from. Please let your National Representatives know who you want as your next world president and then they can put forward the nominations to the WGA Secretary, Pirjo. I will find it hard to leave after so many years as treasurer and then president, but, as in all of life, we have our time to make the best of things and then must move on. So you gold prospectors, travel, have adventures, find new gold and new friends for they are both treasure!

Vince

**Vincent Thurkettle  
President**



Dear Friends,

here I am while another golden year starts and this very year is special to me as never before. Working in the Board gave me the opportunity to stay closer to the central point of decisions in the W.G.A. and, above all, gave me the chance to write the Statutes of our organization. During last years I also wrote the Flag protocol and then I was side by side to President Vincent Thurkettle and Competition Committee chairman Ken Karlsson in writing the new rules for competitions.



I had the big pleasure to talk to really many of you, thousands friends in gold and this let me know your opinions and thoughts about the great gold family we are.

Our organization improves every year thanks to the cooperation of many of you, I can say of all of you: some are just talking and some are doing, but all of you is important to the W.G.A. as a single brick in a wall.

Now I am finalizing my job and I am seeing the dream come true. The World is coming to Biella finally! I hope you will enjoy your time in my own Country, my homeland, the place where I was born. The place I contributed to build as a new spot in the goldpanning world only 9 years ago when we started build the Arena for the Euro2001 event. It was a long way believe me, a huge and tiring job to do but I feel thrilled already now, before the event itself starts... This is not fair!

I hope you will appreciate Victimula golden village and Zubiena town, the hamlet of Vermogno and the town of Biella, capital of our province, the Biellese area of hills and woodlands, mountains and rivers, the single gold chip you will hopefully find in them. And the Italian food and drinks.

If so, my dream it will not just be true, it will be a wonderful special one to store in my mind. And I will be there waiting for you and your relatives and friends coming, together with the Organisation Committee, the Italian goldpanners and the Zubiena and Biellese inhabitants, to welcome you. So, see you soon in Italy, at Biella2009 W.G.C.

yours,

Arturo

### World Goldpanning Association Executive Committee Election

In 2009 the president and treasurer positions are up for election. Both serving members Vincent Thurkettle and Esko Orava have completed two terms and cannot stand again.

Nominations will be accepted up to 24 hours before the WGA council meeting. Nominations must be submitted to the secretary in writing.

Nominees will be invited to give a 2-3 minute speech outlining why they are suitable for the position. Each nation will then vote via their national representatives. The winning candidates will then serve the three year term.

For more details on the election process please see the WGA Statues on the WGA website. <http://www.w-g-a.org>



## My first World Championship

My first world gold panning championship was held in Navelgas – the north west of Spain in the province of Asturias – was and it was reassuring to see familiar faces as I turned up at the campsite. Looking over the field where the panning was to be held I was in awe at the sheer size of everything as I was only used to our quaint British championship in Wanlothead. My aunt Yvonne took me on a tour of Nalvalgas and introduced me to all the smiling faces. Everyone I met was so friendly and I felt really accepted. I had arrived for the World championship on the 20<sup>th</sup> so I

While I was down there we held time trials for the British National Team; although I didn't make it into the team it was good practice and I managed to shave four minutes off my time.

There had been a few days of panning before I had a chance to pan and I was completely dreading getting into a trough. "You're going to make an utter fool of yourself!" kept running through my head. Although people said I would be fine I couldn't shake my nerves. Standing knee deep in the trough did nothing for my anxiety as I had once hoped it would. Then looking out over the sea of faces I could feel something other than fear inside me. "Ready." My heart pounded in my throat. "Get set." Adrenaline gripped my body. "GO!" My body moved like clockwork: gravel in the pan and pan in the water. I could hear my team mates shouting but I tried my best to focus on my panning. When the majority of the gravel had disappeared, I swirled what was left and to my relief I saw three shiny nuggets staring up at me. After I had placed my nuggets into the tube I leapt from the trough and let my team carry on panning. Walking from the panning area I sighed: the first pan is always the most nerve racking.

The music festival was one of the highlights of the championship in my eyes. Even though I found the first singer not to my taste I loved the rest of the music! Dotted throughout the festival were Spanish men dressed as Romans pouring and handing out cider. I began to walk away, sipping at the delicious cider, when the 'Roman' who poured it for me told me I was drinking it all wrong. He took my empty glass from me then refilled it; he passed me the glass and motioned for me to start drinking then said, "All in one!" I downed the cider and held the empty glass up to a cheer from the 'Romans'. I have to



had a day and a half to find my feet and do a little practice before the parade and opening ceremony.

The parade was magical. The Spanish had put a lot of time and effort into it! The bagpipers and band were the perfect way to begin the parade; they just lifted everyone's spirit after having to wait in the very hot sun. Walking through the streets was so exhilarating, singing my heart out, with people cheering on either side holding bright orange balloons and small orange lions that the Dutch were handing out. It was great to see people supporting their country with such pride and enthusiasm.

The next day the competition started I couldn't believe the amount of people panning and the speed they finished in. As a junior I had only used the flat pan once or twice and my time was around seven minutes! I knew I desperately needed to speed up or my chances of winning a medal were close to nothing. So, most mornings I would wake up early, head down to the practice troughs and pan out a few shovelfuls of sand.



admit it was a much more fun way of drinking cider!

During the Championship I tried my hand at Celtic bowling. Teams take it in turns to stand on a step and throw a ball at 25 small wooden sticks. If your aim was better than mine and you knocked some down the ball had to reach past the 25m line; if the ball failed to reach then the knocked down pins wouldn't be counted. We all had a couple of practice shots – I missed them all! Then we teamed up; two Dutch teams, two South African teams, one Spanish team and a Scottish team (which consisted of an Englishman, a Dutchman and two Scots – not truly Scottish but we were the majority). During the game I managed to hit the wooden sticks but unfortunately I didn't hit it hard enough and the ball didn't roll over the 25m line. The game lasted less than an hour and it was no great surprise that the Scottish team didn't win however congratulations to the winning Dutch team!

When I was told by Esther and my cousin Katie that I had won a bronze medal in the juniors I was so overwhelmed. This was such an amazing achievement for me and because I've never won anything so big before I found it hard to express how I felt. So I wore the largest, cheesiest smile possible let out a scream of sheer excitement and dive-bombed into the river – fully clothed!

Walking up to the podium was very nerve-racking. I could pick out the voices of my friends and family in the crowd and I was praying that my cheeks weren't turning a shade of scarlet! However, when I stood on the podium the feeling of pride and joy was overwhelming. Seeing the faces of people I'd just met and those I'd known for years smiling, cheering and clapping was indescribable. As the British national anthem bellowed from the speakers I blinked back tears. Wearing my bronze medal and with my cheesy grin plastered across my face I knew this was a moment that I won't forget.

I would just like to thank everyone who helped me improve my panning, especially Sam – the new men's proficient champion – and Esther, to everyone who cheered me on, to those who organised Navelgas 2008 championships and to everyone who turned up because without you all I wouldn't have had the best holiday of my life. Thank-you.  
Jenny Collins

## Scottish Wedding



On the 1st of May at the site of the 1991 World Goldpanning championships and annual British and Scottish hills of Wanlockhead and Leadhills, Daisy Thurkettle married Martyn Roper.

*(You may remember in Spain at the World Championships, her father Vincent invited everybody to her wedding! )*

Well, the day finally arrived and with an excellent representation of goldpanners from England, Scotland, Wales, Spain, Finland, Italy and the Netherlands along with family and friends the two were wed. Of course any event involving goldpanners near gold rivers meant at certain times smart clothes were replaced by wellies and shovels and friends could be found digging holes and panning down the dirt!

The wedding rings were made from Welsh and Scottish gold which was panned by Daisy and Martyn with guidance from Vince.

We wish them all the very best for their future!





## Perthshire is so beautiful .. Visit to Scotland

Oh yes, Jonathan Wheeler says, here in Perthshire in the southern parts of The Highlands things are different from Wanlockhead. Here we for sure have more gold in our waters, but here things are different!

We have been driving by car 150 so beautiful kilometers from Wanlockhead in Scottish Lowlands north to Loch Tay and Perthshire. We are breath taken by the Scottish landscape, it is just so marvelous! As the ladies we are we first stop in Crieff in a shop with knitting yarn at very good prices and then in another shop selling a lot of minerals both polished and unpolished, still at very good prices. And everything is just SO wonderful!

But now we have to push on to a very sweet little town named Aberfeldy and there we are to meet with Jonathan Wheeler from Panvasking Scotland and Donald Ridell from Highland Adventure Safaris.



**Dagmar Stenecker from GGF Sweden takes a break in Perthshire after a quite rewarding day**

We start with the town. Aberfeldy is such a lovely and idyllic place on the northeast tip of Loch Tay in the southern part of Scottish Highlands. In the old days it was a local center for transports of cattle far around. Both cows and sheep. The cows are quite rare today but the sheep are still well represented, lots of picturesque little white dots high up in the beautiful hills.

As for the Swedish west coast, southern parts of Skåne and the archipelago of Stockholm, Perthshire is a landscape now being almost hugged to death by people with money. Latest newcomer amongst the celebrities of the town is J K Rowling, you know the lady with the books about Harry Potter.... No, I am not critical at all, I don't envy her all the money because she has earned it, it is just the structure I wish to describe. Prices on grounds and houses rise to fantasy levels which makes it very difficult for old inhabitants and their children to stay where they are born.

So here it is very different from Wanlockhead, the village we first visited on this October trip to Scotland. There you have only ONE landowner, the Duke of Buccleuch who owns both the land and mineral rights since hundreds of years back and is kind enough to lease his rights to the museum in Wanlockhead who in turn may sell panning licenses to tourist for a reasonable amount which makes everybody happy.

Here it is definitely quite different!

### Hi mate!

We have located Jonathan Wheeler over Internet and with help from the big tourist office Visit Scotland and meet with him in a very nice coffee shop in this picturesque town. Jonathan for sure has a very mixed background. He has grown up "a little bit everywhere" in this world as his father works with buying different types of tea for the big company Lipton. This explains a great deal, i e his childhood years in Indonesia. Anyway, Jonathan has an education within natural sciences and has worked as a tour guide with mountain climbers both in the Alps and in the Himalaya - "oh no, just up to base camp on the level of 5,500 meters...." and learned panning for gold in Australia.

- "I met those two elderly men in Queensland. They owned a big area with a lot of sand and they wanted someone else to pan it through for them, so this I did. I slept in their house, they had beds but I slept on the kitchen table. You find both snakes and crocodiles there, so the kitchen table actually was the safest place to sleep when snakes and crocodiles crawled through the house at nights."

### Oh yes, this is our man!

Back in Scotland since a few years Jonathan now leases panning rights in a gold bearing water from a close by landowner and gives courses in panning. He would very much love to work full time with this! Then in Perthshire you

have gold, a LOT of gold, Jonathan says with a smile when we meet in the coffee shop and picks a few samples out of the pockets of his jacket. Nuggets. BIG nuggets. And flakes, so big they actually not are flakes but small nuggets.

Oh yes, THIS we have come here to see!

### **Wow, the first nugget**

We head off with car to a place a few kilometers out of town, we can watch deer and grouse and Jonathan tells us he has been given permission from the landowner to pan here as he now has us two visitors from this organization of panners from Sweden.

Panning first day gives just a little as the waters here too are so high because so much more rain than normal has fallen in Scotland this fall. But the next day starts absolutely fine! In his fourth pan Jonathan gets a nugget as big as my the nail of my thumb! And so it continues! No more this big nuggets but smaller nuggets. We work with Jonathan's own version of the Henderson pump (a plastic tube with a tennis ball on a stick) and it is a bit difficult to suck the sand and gravel up as the waters are so high. So I go for a little walk to draw some sketches for water colour paintings alter on. When I come back Dagmar and Jonathan has filled up a pan with gravel for me, they want me to have at least something.

But their eyes get wider and wider as I pan not less than nine little nuggets out of this very special pan!!!

### **But what about problems?**

Oh yes, there are several. In Wanlockhead we have visited earlier there is only one big land owner leasing his mineral rights to the Museum of Wanlockhead where interested panners can buy a panning licenses for a very reasonable amount of money.

In Perthshire there are several big landowners with quite other interests. Many of them invest in game hunting of deer, roe deer and grouse. It pays off good, to hunt here for one day can cost the hunter about 1,000£. There are also other landowners more interested in investing in building summer houses and luxurious villas in those so very attractive surroundings.

And then there happens to be that old story with ruthless panners who were here once with some type of small excavator and behaved very badly. Then in the surroundings in Perthshire there is a lot of gold.

### **Write a "letter to the editor"!**

We discuss those matters a lot with Jonathan and try to find a common line. As Swedish tourists we always are very careful about nature and always ready to obey local restrictions, as interested as we are maybe in the future to be able to pan for gold in Perthshire on about similar conditions as in Wanlockhead, i e to pay for a panning licenses either per day, per week or per season. And of course with total consideration to all local restrictions for nature protection.

Jonathan pins down the problems. The land owners are quite a few, till now game hunting has given a lot of money. There is an ongoing discussion about panning on different local and regional levels within the community but the vulgar propaganda against panners as ruthless devastators of nature has those days won the majority. Unfortunately.

We meet later that evening in the pub later together with Jonathan's girlfriend Sally, student of environmental issues, and discuss the matters over again over a beer and some haggis. As there happens to be this much gold in the region, would it not be possible after all to come up with an agreeable solution that could satisfy all? To make decision makers on different levels aware of the fact that gold panning tourists like us are no robbers? And make it possible to give an income from selling panning licenses to tourists for those land owners with goldbearing waters on



**Jonathan Wheeler runs Panning in Perthshire**



**Vivica Grantén from GGF Sweden checking a pan in Perthshire waters**

their ground who are not that interested in focusing on game hunting? Panning tourists would give an income to Perthshire as well, they would stay overnight, they would shop, eat and so on....

So Jonathan asks us for a favour. Please write a "letter to the editor" of the local newspaper and tell what you have experienced. So this we do, we write a nice little letter to the local newspaper as tourists from abroad and very kindly ask for permission to be able to pan in the future in those precious goldbeating waters. The answer comes by returning e-mail. Our sheer appearance and the rumor we represent a gold bearing place in south Sweden with 25,000 visitors per season (read *Guldvasningen i Ädelfors*) has given as result that Jonathan immediately gets the opportunity to negotiate with yet another private landowner about panning permission.

So maybe it will ease up? All panners are not devastators, Swedish panners know how to behave in nature and Perthshire is SO beautiful! And that special nugget

Jonathan got in his fourth pan, big as my thumb nail, is still in my memory.

### **Jeep safari with champagne**

But you find other attractions by Loch Tay as well. Here you have Highland Safaris with shop and restaurant with local specialties, managed by Donald Ridell and his wife with staff. Here you are offered safaris with jeep in the beautiful Scottish hills and you can chose from different types of excursions at different price levels. You can chose a ride with jeep and your own driver and guide in order to marvel the fantastic nature not possible to reach for those who cannot or don't want to walk by foot. Or as a team-building activity for your company. If you wish an exclusive party tent and want to be served salmon and champagne together with your colleagues in a very remote beautiful valley, an experience of a lifetime, you can order it by Donald! He'll fix it...

Donald also offers panning by his lodge but here the target group is mostly children. You have panning ditches with gravel from the close by baryt-mine and the children get panning instructions, not so often gold but different types of minerals. Gold panning? But of course! But usually Donald then contacts Jonathan....

Back to the beginning. As local and regional decision-makers consider how to follow the rules who actually stipulates that all mineral rights in Great Britain belong to the state - The Crown, despite the opinion of local landowners and as the representatives of the big tourist company Visit Scotland at our visit in Glasgow with great delight tell us they would love to do all they can to give service for visiting panners, we just wait. And hope our nice little "letter to the editor" in the local Scottish newspaper in Perthshire will show the result we so eagerly hope for. That we as foreign tourists the forthcoming summer are SO very much welcome to buy local panning permissions and pan in those gorgeous waters in Perthshire, preferably together with Jonathan.

Till further on Jonathan Wheeler goes on with his main income source, his event hall for paint-ball-enthusiasts. But he would like very much to see members from GGF as his visitors. If you wish to pan with Jonathan as instructor in the water he today leases from a local landowner it costs 25£ for three hours, i.e. 320 SEK, then everything is included except "wellies" (which is a short form for rubber boots, named after the Duke of Wellington, he who beat up the French emperor Napoleon in Waterloo once, remember?). For groups of five persons or more it costs 10£, hardly 130 SEK, for half a day. Jonathans e-mail address you find below. But when summer is here maybe you may pan by yourself and buy a local panning permission, maybe this will be the result of our visit?

Vivica Grantén and Dagmar Stenecker from GGF visited Perthshire, Scotland

Our thanks to Jonathan Wheeler, [jon@perthshirepaintball.com](mailto:jon@perthshirepaintball.com), Donald Ridell at Highland Safaris, [www.highlandsafaris.net](http://www.highlandsafaris.net), [info@highlandsafaris.net](mailto:info@highlandsafaris.net), the tourist organisation Visit Scotland, [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com) and to Enterprise Europe Network Jönköping, [www.enterpriseurope.se](http://www.enterpriseurope.se) who granted us a scholarship to establish those contacts. Maybe something for other companies to think about?





## "Yukon Dan Gold Panning in The Classroom"

I'm very proud to say I'm the only Canadian that travels around Canada teaching what I love doing. It is not uncommon for me to teach "6,000" people a year the art of gold panning. Most of my presentation are in school's teaching "Hands On" with students of all ages.

Teachers cover various topics in the curriculum ranging from Rocks & Minerals, World Gold Rushes, Earth & Science, Pioneer Days & Canadian history.

All students go home with "Gold Fever", teaching about what is below our feet is very important, we use minerals we extract from methods of mining for our everyday uses with most people in the world not realizing.

Actually it's very sad people don't realize where all our belongings come from.

In a classroom presentation that is roughly "85" minutes long the students will learn more information about mining then what a teacher can teach in a week.



My presentations have brought me to some of the biggest mining conventions in Canada at these I get to show the Presidents, CEO's my "Hands On" technique on gold recovery.

This year I was very proud to have hosted the "150th" Fraser River Gold Panning Championships in "2008". We had "110" gold panners compete in various competitions, "Gold Fever" was had by all.

All children plus teens that competed received a brand new gold pan with a bag of paydirt for entering. The professional panners that joined us were more than happy to teach plus coach the beginner gold panners from all ages.

Having them there was a huge plus for beginners, it gave them

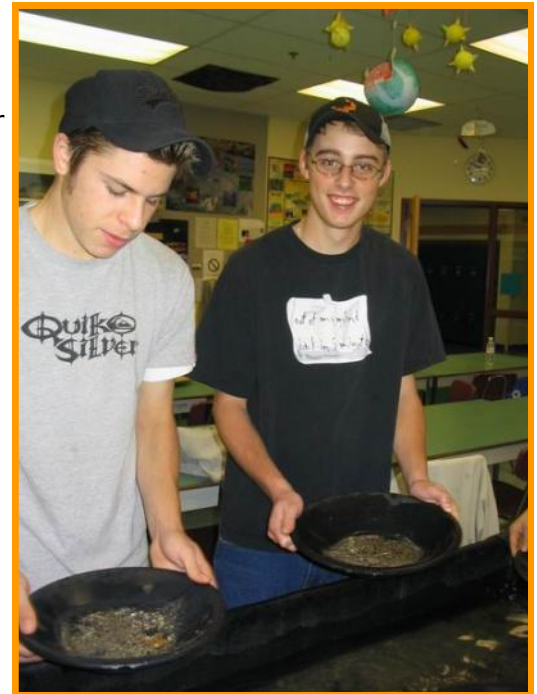
all the confidence needed to compete.

The competition lasted for three days, full of excitement for all, throughout the competitions we held gold rush events for all panners.

The gold panning area was overwhelmed with enthusiastic panners for the two days.

We held individual competitions for all panners with the fastest panners receiving some very special prizes.

The most interesting competition was the two person blind fold event were the panner was blind folded & their partner was their eyes. Once the panner was finished they switched.



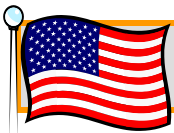
My plan was to do this competition for British Columbia's 150th Anniversary, it went over so well that is why we are doing it again this year.

All panners throughout the world are invited to win all prizes

The most important part to the competition is that it was run fairly, ALL gold panners use the same style of gold pan, the traditional medal pan from the "1858" Fraser River Gold Rush.

Well my friends Hope to see you at the "2009" Fraser River Gold Panning Championships August 28th - 30th  
Dan





## CALIFORNIA STATE OPEN AND US NATIONAL GOLD PANNING CHAMPI-

One hundred and eighty six panners went through a wild and woolly two day event, held on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008 at Forest Hill – California – USA. The panners came to determine who was going to have the bragging rights of being the best – at least for one

dominated the overall Championships, counting the Nationals. Mike took four gold medals and two silver, Don took three gold medals, one silver and one bronze. Barbara took two gold medals, two silver and one bronze. These three took all of the US National Championship gold medals.

### Here are the winners – **State Champions –**

**Mens Skilled:** Gold – Mike Sutton, Silver – Mike Clark, Bronze – Paul Pekarek

**Veterans:** Gold – Don Robinson, Silver – John McClure, Bronze – Stan Makiney

**Womens Skilled:** Gold – Hollie Watson, Silver – Barbara Sutton, Bronze – Carol Ebbitt

**Open:** Gold – Jim Eakin, Silver – Chris Farrell, Bronze – Don Robinson

**Classic Pan:** Gold – Mike Sutton, Silver – Ron Mills, Bronze – Barbara Sutton

### **Beginners:**

Gold – Kathleen Cunningham, Silver – David Wasserman, Bronze – John Nelson

**Juniors:** Gold – Kyle Gilbrech, Silver – Sierra Starr, Bronze – Haley Hassen

### **Teams:**

We-3-JBC Gold – Barbara Cardoza, Carol Ebbitt, Jan Makiney

49ers Silver – Mike Sutton, Barbara Sutton, Don Robinson

Two Roses and a Thorn – Bronze – Karen Bartholomew, Fuzzy Mason, Susan Okey

### **National Champions –**

#### **Mens Skilled:**

Gold – Mike Sutton, Silver – Jim Eakin, Bronze Mike Clark and Don Robinson (tied)

#### **Veterans:**

Gold – Don Robinson, Silver – Mike Sutton, Bronze – John McClure and Barbara Sutton (tied)

#### **Womens Skilled:**

Gold – Barbara Sutton, Silver – Carol Ebbitt, Bronze - Karen Bartholomew

#### **Teams:**

49ers: Gold - Mike Sutton, Barbara Sutton, Don Robinson

Two Roses and a Thorn: Silver – Karen Bartholomew, Fuzzy Mason, Susan Okey

We-3-JBC: Bronze – Barbara Cardoza, Carol Ebbitt, Jan Makiney.

Congratulations to all the winners!



year! The US National was combined with the State Championships in a unique way by setting up the National winners based on their performance in three different State events.

This year, the Californian State Championships expanded the number of panning events, with medals awarded in each of the following events for Skilled Men, Skilled Women, Veterans, Beginners, Juniors, Teams, Open and Classic Pan.

The two new events added this year were the Open and the Classic Pan. This brings the State Championships in line with the World Gold Panning Championships. The Open event, is any type of gold pan including the Ferrari or flat pans from Europe. The Classic Pan event is steel pans only, conforming to the gold pans used primarily during the gold rush of California. Panners went for all their worth without losing any gold. This is hard to do when you have previous State, National and World Champions breathing down your neck! Saturday were the preliminaries with the objective of determining the best 12 panners in each event. The best advanced to Sunday for a real head-to-head shootout. The Beginners and Juniors had their finals on Saturday.

Sunday began with fast and furious, but controlled and scheduled, semi finals to arrive at the top six in each category and then these six went on to determine the champions.. The only exception was that the top six Three Persons Teams advanced from the preliminaries to the finals on Sunday. By the end of the day, the State and National Champions emerged.

Mike Sutton, Don Robinson and Barbara Sutton





The "Welcome Stranger" Gold Panning championships were held in the Gordon gardens on Sunday 28 September 2008. Weather was perfect and a great family day for around 44 individual panners, from youngsters five year old, to veterans.



A noticeable increase in Novice Men and Novice Women participation rate as each year people become more confident at having a go at this enjoyable pastime. Coiltek provided the gold for the practice tubs which was readily pounced upon, especially the children, who licked the barrel clean and showing off their flakes of gold. Specially made mini Qanta pans for Juniors had been provided by our trusty sponsor Martin Marks, introducing youngsters to new gold panning technology.

Traditional steel gold pans were provided for those who had never panned before. Seasoned panners battled it out to retain their previous titles and panning times are getting shorter each year and compare favourably with times recorded at World Gold Panning Championships.

A celebrity event held the crowd spellbound as they watched this year's 'cream of the crop' which included a panner from Queensland and a husband and wife team from Bendigo, who all represented Australia in the World Gold Panning Championships in Spain in July this year.

The "Golden Triangle" Challenge, which offered 3 local gold nuggets as prizes, was also hotly contested with younger panners competing against older, seasoned panners, which just goes to show that the interest in gold panning is gathering momentum.

Panners and their families had travelled as far away as Queensland, NSW, Melbourne, Colac, Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat, Bendigo and Daylesford.

Congratulations to all the Dunolly Traders who decorated their shops and windows with the 'gold theme' and Aussie flags promoting goldpanning. This brought on many

comments from the public as to "What a great little gold mining town Dunolly is".

Our special thanks to Bryce Rawlings for his commentary during the Championships. Well Done Bryce! Also to Flynn Ward representative Cr. Brian O'Connor representing Central Goldfields Shire Council, who presented each winner with their medals and prizes on behalf of our Association.

We wish to thank all our sponsors, service clubs, traders, time keepers and volunteers who set up and cleaned up for their support throughout the day for another great Annual Community event.

Tony Mills from GoldSearch presented the major prize, a White's metal detector to the winner in the Skilled Men which was really appreciated. Henry Doran, President of the "Welcome Stranger" Gold Panning Ass., on behalf of Martin Marks, who could not be with us today, presented the latest 'Qanta' speed pan to the winner in the Skilled



Women. This type speed pan has been used during the last 4 World Gold Panning Championships and is very fast.

Our thanks to all our sponsors for many of secondary prizes and children's events. 'Sovereigns on Broadway' who embroidered our burgundy and gold banner had people asking "Who made our fantastic banner?"

To our judges, recorders, time keepers and bucket brigade who must have shovelled 4 tones of gravel during the course of the day, a very big thank you. These are people behind the scenes and a vital component in the success of the event.

Also a special thank you to the staff of the CFA who provided the BBQ and drinks as panners dribbled in all day for quality food.

So until next year! Thanks again to everyone! Your support was really appreciated.



## Gold news from Finland

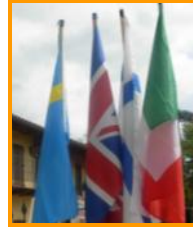
Summer 2008 shall be remembered as the summer with big nuggets in Finland. Gold miner Raimo Kanamäki found 113 gram nugget in July from his claim in Lemmenjoki. The nugget was later sold at 30 000 euro. The first of August there was solar eclipse in northern Finland. Amazingly two big nuggets were found at the very same day. Jouko Korhonen and Jari Järvinen found an 88 gram nugget in Lem-



menjoki. Risto and Maija Vehviläinen hit even bigger, 193 gram nugget from their claim in Sotajoki. The latter is 5<sup>th</sup> biggest gold nugget ever in Finland. All the discoveries were done with hydraulic excavators.

Autumn 2008 shall be remembered by miners from a catastrophic proposal for a new mining law. After nine years work authorities published the proposal which would put an end to professional gold mining in Finland. Digging with machines shall be banned after a short period. Professional miners who now have permanent mining areas must claim their area again. Recreational gold miners shall be punished with 5 times higher fees and more bureaucracy. The new law in proposed form would make it impossible to make a living by gold digging. The fight continues in political scene.

## Spring Meeting of the Exec Committee



From the 28th May to 2nd June the spring board meeting was held in Italy in the town of Biella, home of the 2009 World Goldpanning Championships. The executive board consisting of Vincent Thurkettle, Arturo Ramella, Esko Orava, (with apologies from Pirjo Muotkajärvi) along with committee chairs Ken Karls-

son and Paul Thurkettle worked to prepare for the new president handover, statutes and WGA competition rules as well as work on ongoing issues within the WGA.



A press conference was also held with the Mayors of three municipalities and the chief administrator of "Villaggi Valle Elvo".



On the Sunday the board visited the construction site of the 2009 World Championships and "tested" the new pools with a panning competition.



During lunch with the Italian gold volunteers who are building the site, the President congratulated them on an excellent layout

and looked forward to seeing it fully completed.

## Editor's Meeting

**There will be a meeting of all the editors of national gold associations and web sites in Italy during the World Championships. Its aim will be to discuss liaisons between the WGA web site and magazine and national publications. Please check the notice boards for date and place.**



## **Tamshiyacu A dream come true**

Probably like you, when I first heard this word I wanted to answer : Bless you!. But in fact, it was the name of the village where Ariane and I would be going to experience the "jungle".



We had arrived the day before in Iquitos in Peru. It is a town that can only be reached by boat or plane in the middle of the Peruvian jungle in the North East not far from Brazil and Columbia. There, the heat and moisture weigh on your whole body for days making you sweat pea size drops until you relax and adopt the appropriate walking pace. When preparing the trip, I avidly read the article in the Golden Times Kalko and Inkeri had written about their gold-panning trip to Peru in 2000. Unfortunately, our plans took us to other part of the country and when leaving for the Land of Gold, I had given up the idea of panning with the Garimperos. After two weeks travelling the conventional routes in the south (Machu Pichu, Cusco, Arequipa, ...) Ariane and I had decided to venture North.

### **We disembarked in the mud**

Almost a third of Peru is covered by the jungle and Iquitos was the best place to start from. Soon we contacted a man met on the internet and the next day we arrived in Tamshiyacu. The vertical sun poured its heat on us as we disembarked in the mud. Nobody to welcome us, no dancing, no children running around naked and a desert plaza de Armas surrounded by flat brick buildings. Not quite like I imagined an Amazonian village. I wasn't disappointed, it was too hot to be, but I must confess I'd expected something much more like the stereotyped image spread by the NG documentaries. Amongst the little crowd, a man stepped forward and we were introduced to the ever smiling Juan, our guide for three days.

### **We met real Amazonia**

We were given a hotel room but the rest of the time, Juan would be with us and we would be with him and his family. So we took our first meal in his house and there, outside the center of the village, we met real Amazonia. Juan lives in a small house made of a palm roof and wooden boards 6 meters by 6 with 7 children and his wife. The electricity supply is out of work, water comes from a 200 litre drum and the stove is made of clay. The street is trenched to install a sewage drain but Juan won't benefit from it unless he raises his house by three meters. Beside this will mean a new pollution source for the Amazon because all the village's waste water will be channeled to the river and there are no plans for a treatment plant. Progress has a cost, let it be environmental. In no time, his wife spread artwork on a table and explained they wanted to build an extension for the house and they needed money. After dinner we went with Juan to drink a marvelously cool beer in a street shop before going to bed.



### **The pristine forest**

During two days Juan introduced us to the "jungle" and we quickly realized that the jungle wasn't there anymore. For kilometers around the village there were chakras (vegetable and fruit garden) and the original forest had completely disappeared. Butterflies and birds were plentiful but the big birds, the turtles, the alligators, the snakes and huge trees were absent. We learned that the real jungle had now to be protected in Na-

tional parks and that it meant a trip of several days to reach pristine forest. The pressure by the villages is too big and hunting and fishing has decimated the flora and fauna mainly to sell on markets. Still, gliding gently amongst the lianas and spotting parrots and small colourful birds was charming. The chakras also looked like a real forest to us foreigners. The different plant sorts were cleverly mixed to reduce disease and bug spreading and there was not one tree or plant that reminded us of a European sort. On the way back we also had the joy to spot pink and grey dolphins breathing and jumping in the setting sun. Woaw!



Again, the creek didn't look too good. There were indeed clay and bigger stones of about 3 centimeters but no big rocks as I expected. I filled the "pan" with a shovel full and collected a lot of black sand but no gold. So I triple checked the bottom of the an, being used to very small Belgian gold, and, in a flash, I saw something shine. It had the right colour but it was so small that I couldn't tell for sure. Besides,

### Clear water and fine white sand

On the first day, minutes after our arrival, I had asked Juan if it was possible to go gold panning in the area but he could only tell me that two Brazilians had been arrested a few weeks before for prospecting illegally in a nearby river. So we had arranged to go to this creek and



give it a try. I didn't want kilo's but finding gold in Peru and more specifically in Amazonia had always been a childhood dream. I asked Juan's wife if I could borrow her cooking pan because I didn't have any equipment and we set off to the

creek. When we arrived I could immediately tell that it wouldn't be good. It was nice clear water and fine white sand. No pebbles, no clay, just mud. Half-heartedly, I gave it a try and, indeed, nothing. Juan and Chris, his son, also tried and we ended up with a few shrimps Chris had caught. Juan was very interested in Goldpanning and we enthusiastically talked about it. He kept asking technical details and I soon understood that he considered trying to improve his meager income. On the



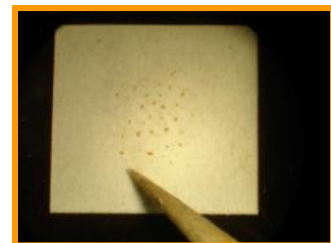
way back he asked me what I wanted for a creek and I just said that bigger rocks would be a good start.

### I delicately crushed it between two pebbles.

After dinner, Juan wanted to take me to another creek where there were bigger rocks. So we set off in the late afternoon to go to this other stream. Some villagers were washing their clothes while the children swam and jumped around. I expressed my concern about mud we would stir if we panned upstream. Juan smiled. He couldn't care less.

there was a lot of oxidized pyrite as well so I decide to test it. I was almost convinced it wasn't gold and I delicately crushed the tiny flake between two smooth quartz pebbles. To my great surprise, it didn't transform into powder or divide in small leaves but left a golden trace on the smooth surface. Could it be? I couldn't believe it. Gold wasn't signaled in the area and nobody had ever mentioned it to Juan. Besides, it was really too small to be sure.

With more motivation, I did another pan and this time nothing. Another pan and, yes, a few more specks. In fact, there were minute specks in every pan. I was 99% convinced it was gold but they were so small I could tell for sure. Juan and Chris could feel my joy and enthusiasm and started to get the fever. Especially Chris who frenetically panned the sand in search of the metal. With a little help, he could also find one or two colours. Juan had already dollars flashing in his eyes and I had to put everything in perspective. **If** it was gold; we had found in one hour the equivalent of 0, 0004 soles which meant nothing, even for Juan. But the financial aspect excepted, we were happy. It was a privileged moment shared there with bare feet in this fresh little stream. For a while, all the cultural and economic differences between us had vanished in a common quest for the precious metal.



### Conclusion

Once at home, I quickly dried the sand brought back from Tamshiyacu. It had escaped a random control at the US custom because the officer was too interested by two 50 centimeters machetes and whiskey Loretano (Amazonian alcohol) I had in my luggage (He let me go ;op...). Under the microscope, I could isolate 30 specks that were unmistakably real gold. Better than a big nugget, this minute quantity of gold that does not even make up a fly shit and the memories associated to it are worth a fortune.

Bruno

## TURIN PAPYRUS MAP OF THE GOLD MINES

By Dino Buccoliero of Milan - Italy

## The Madonna of the Elvo

By Ottavio Lora, Biella Goldpanners' Association

The Turin Egyptian Museum owns the oldest topographical and geological map of Egypt. It is an important collection made 3100 years ago and illustrates the gold mines



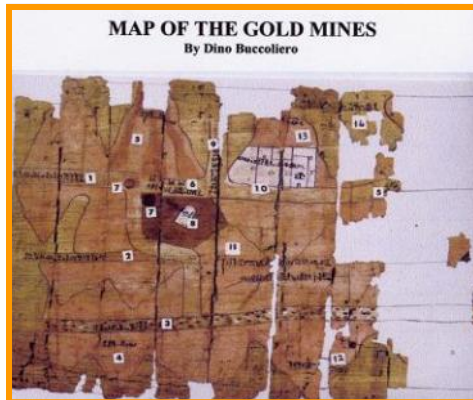
of various types of rocks "bekhen" stone quarries. Located along the route of the Wadi-Hammamat, about half way between Coptos on the Nile and the port of Qusier on the Red Sea.

The papyrus, only partially preserved, came from a private tomb in the ancient village of Deir el-Medina, near Luxor (ancient Thebe), in the nearby Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens between 1814 and 1821, and sold along with many other papyri by Bernadino Drovetti to King Carlo Felice in 1824, who established the Egyptian Museum in Turin.

It is now known that the map was drawn up by the scribe of the tomb - Amennakhte, son of Ipu, and was prepared around the reign of Ramses IV (1151 - 1145 BC) to obtain the gold and blocks of stones "Bekhen" on behalf of the King.

The more important section of the map is a fragment, about forty centimeters high, called "map of the gold mines".

The description of this map is represented by a legend written in hieratics, the cursive hieroglyphic writing of the time and explains the destinations of routes which run parallel to each other through pinkish-red mountains on both sides, shown as cones. The mountains are illustrated in pink, brown, black and white, nature of the country, houses and other features. The term "mountains of gold" is repeated in the area coloured red. The orientation of this particular map places South at the top, according to Egyptian belief. The map marker shows how the two main east-west roads lie in the valleys that are linked by a road that curves through a mountain pass.



Some years ago, in the cosy little church of San Damiano of Carisio, Vercelli, the congregation used to



venerate a XVII century wooden statue representing the Madonna of the Rosary. But one dark autumn morning the Deacon, Sig. Giovanni Giupponi, discovered the sacrilegious theft of the precious statue. The faithful were greatly saddened by this fact and almost at once a great idea came into my head... why not create another Madonna in picture form, using gold from the Elvo? After all it's my second occupation... I put my plan to the mayor, Sig. Luciano Paladino who liked the idea and he set to work immediately at organising a team to go to the auriferous spot.

On the designated day over 40 people, armed with shovels, picks and wheelbarrows, many of whom military men on leave from the National Alpine Regiment, turned up at the meeting point. They were happy to accept advice both from me and from the volunteers of the Milan "Oro in Natura" organisation led by the then president Sig. Dino Buccoliero.



The fact of having forty tough men turn up so spontaneously and willingly, accustomed as they were to the toils of labouring on the land, left me feeling utterly amazed.

Five sluices were positioned in the river; everybody worked all out without once thinking of quitting. They

## AMERICANS ON THE CENTRAL VICTORIAN GOLDFIELDS

gave everything they had in order to be part of this enterprise of creating "their" Madonna. The agreed-on working point was quite extensive but somewhat poor in yield and what's more, it was rather far from the water. But with such a workforce, the final result would surely have to be excellent. At the end of operations, that



stretch of river looked very different from before. Certainly, when Jupiter hurled Phaeton into the icy waters of the Po, he did not alter the landscape to such a degree! The banks of the Elvo along that tract resembled one great ploughed field; in total, 23 grammes had been found!

I confess that I was quite nervous when it came to creating that picture of the Madonna. I didn't want to disappoint all those good people... so I would have to outdo myself!

And the great day came. The names of all participants were listed on a

parchment and the presentation of the picture to the Ecclesiastical Authorities took place in a singular and moving way. The Vicar General of the Diocese of Biella, Mons. Ferdinando Marchi, celebrated Mass on the stoney bank of the Elvo, right where the gold had been found. The result surpassed all imagination and emotions ran very high. The event was naturally immortalised by the omnipresent reporter Pier Emilio Calliera and it enjoyed great visibility in the press.

Years later the bishop, Mons. Gianni Ambrosio, was transferred to other duties in Piacenza. His congregation wished to make him a gift of a copy of that Madonna, a symbol for them of their land rich in the history and traditions of gold, dating back thousands of years. This work was unanimously baptized "Madonna of the Elvo" which for me was a source of great pride and satisfaction. When I attend Mass in that church and see "my" Madonna, I must confess that I feel myself to be a little more important in her sight (How presumptuous of me!!!). Perhaps we're looking at a unique case where a thuggish, sacrilegious thief managed, in spite of himself, to cement such faith, solidarity and friendship among the population of Carisio.... who knows.... But what if it was the "Madonna of the Elvo"?....

p.s. 10 years after the theft the statue was recovered by the Carabinieri in Rome and, to the great satisfaction of the faithful, was subsequently returned to its rightful owners..

The Australian gold rushes of the early 1850s brought about a drastic escalation of population, and consequently, of consumer demands. The Navigation Acts were repealed in 1851, but California was still booming, and it was not until the late 1850s, that the American merchants expanded the volume of their exports to our Australia's colonies.

Fine quality American flour was the largest single item in this trade. The advent of the much faster clipper ships also assisted in the rapid increase in trade in the later fifties.

The port of Melbourne saw thirteen US ships in 1852, 134 ships in 1853. In that year, it is recorded that over seven hundred ships were at anchor in Port Phillip, at one time. "A forest of Masts".

In 1853, 14.000 tons of flour were imported into Victoria, more than half of it was from the US. The value of flour and bread imported in that year was just over 417.000 pounds, plus 307.000 pounds of grains and other food-stuffs.

Also at this time, the quality of miners tools, equipment etc. from the US was often superior to the English article. Supply seldom matched the demand for water buckets, tubs, picks, shovels and canvas goods. Virginian tobacco was in great demand. Ten years later, supplies of kerosene began to be an important factor in the balance of trade.

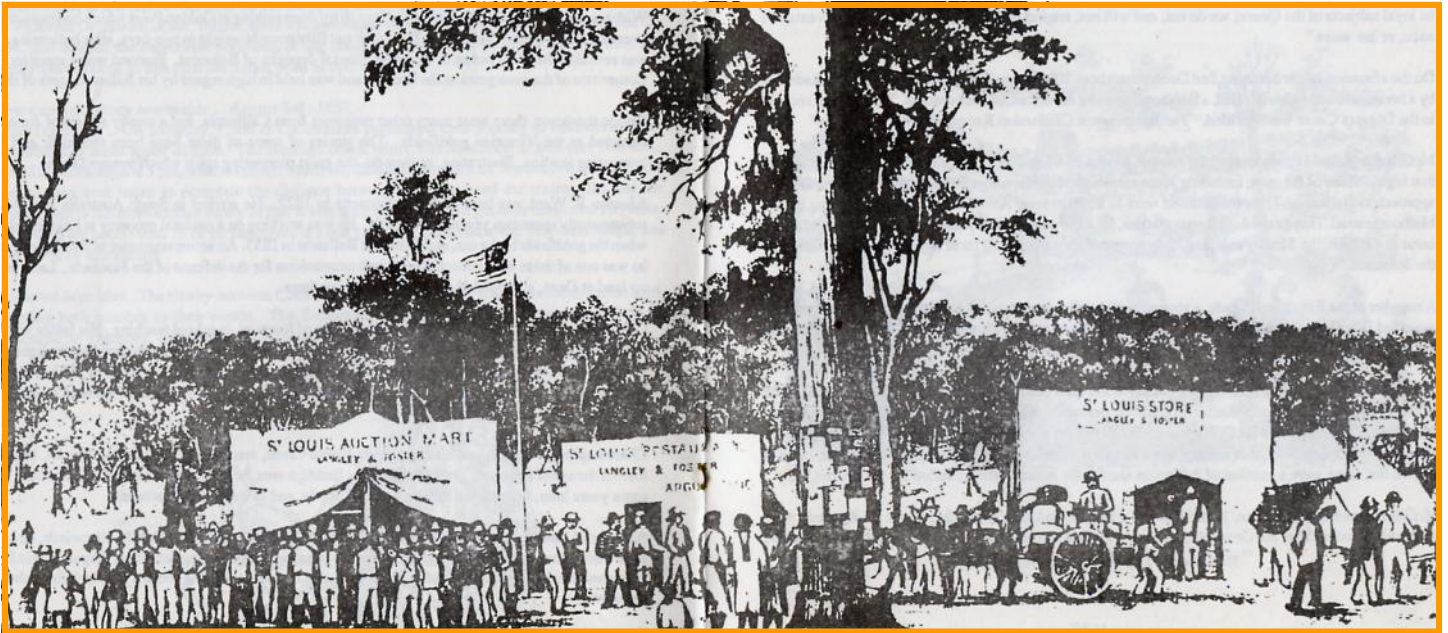
Other items of trade were superseded in quality by a rapidly expanding tonnage of building timber imported for the needs of the ever growing population on the gold-fields. There was an urgent need for housing in the gold-field townships. Douglas Fir became known as Oregon Pine, and still retains that name in Australia.

Building materials and pre fabricated houses arrived in some quantities from the US. One such prefab, still stands at Fryerstown, near Castlemaine. It was erected in 1856, on its present site. The Wesleyans erected their brick church nearby in 1861 using the older building as a hall and school.

### COBB & CO COACH LINES

Cobb & Co was launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1854, by several "downeastern" Yankee young men, on the Forest Creek/Bendigo road. They had all had experience with the Express Company of New York and came to Australia in 1853, their task, to form a goods carrying business for Adams & Co., and Wells, Fargo & Co. They could not report favourably in that line of business, but advised their principles that there was a great future for light passenger carrying coach lines on the American pattern. The parent company turned down their recommendation, so four young fellows formed a Company on their own initiative. Their names were John Murray Peck, Freeman Cobb, James Swanton and John Lamber.





Peck and Swanton were "whips" of outstanding ability. Peck is reported to have driven the 40 passenger "jack" coach out to a Melbourne Cup drawn by a team of fourteen horses in pairs. What a sight! And what an experience to have been aboard! They managed the lines, often driving themselves. Lamber managed the central stables and supplies for the rapidly expanding business. Freeman Cobb ran the main office and the finance needed for the Company.

## **GOLD**

When California broke out in 1849, Australians were among the earliest arrivals at the port of "Frisco". Two examples of adventurers were Edward Hargreaves and "Happy Jim" Esmond. Hargreaves discovered the first payable gold in Australia near Bathurst in New South Wales and so began the chain of events usually described as the Australian goldrushes.

James Esmond returned to his old haunts near Buninyong in Victoria, to take up employment as a bush worker. He was one of those who claimed a reward for the discovery of the first payable gold in Victoria in 1851. Clunes was the scene of his earlier activities, but he soon returned to Ballarat.

Lyman O. Hart, a native of New York State arrived in Sydney in 1852. Shortly afterwards he moved to Melbourne, in transit to Bendigo where he became involved in gold mining. He spent a year returning to Melbourne and Sydney visiting the other colonies. Returning to Victoria, he tried his luck once again at goldmining at Blackwood diggings. He had only moderate success, for he joined the staff of the "Daylesford Mercury" newspaper in 1863. Taking up municipal affairs, he was elected to the Daylesford Borough, serving as Mayor in 1873.

Because of various economic factors, the mining industry in Cornwall, England was in decline in the early nineteenth century. As a result conditions among the mining population became critical. There was great distress, and immigration to the US, and to the colonies escalated.

Many Cornish families came to South Australia under contract to the South Australian Copper Co. in the 1840s.

Some of those who had migrated, were attracted to Victoria by the goldrushes of the 1850s.

One such family consisted of the three brothers Faull, two of whom eventually settled in the Castlemaine district. They had worked for a time in the world famous Calumet & Hecla Mine at Michigan USA.

By the end of 1853, there were many Americans on the Victorian goldfields and they were probably better represented at Ballarat, than elsewhere on the Victoria goldfields.

In a well documented article, it was estimated that 16,000 Americans landed in eastern Australia between 1851 and 1853. Over one half of these were goldfields residents.

On 28<sup>th</sup> November 1854, while military re-enforcements were being brought up from Melbourne to Ballarat, the American residents tendered a dinner to Mr. Tarleton – the American Consul in Melbourne. Governor Charles Hotham had shown a marked tolerance for Americans since his arrival in Melbourne. It seems that Mr. Tarleton's visit to Ballarat on the eve of the Eureka insurrection, was relevant to the preservation of his goodwill. On the afternoon, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1854, about 200 men on foot, marched into the Stockade, led by a horseman named James McGill, a flamboyant young American of Irish descent. This body of recruits to the Diggers Cause were entitled "The Independent Californian Rangers Revolver Brigade".

McGill was placed in command of the miners' Stockade, when Peter Lalor retired for a brief rest during that night. Some of the men, including some members of the Revolver Brigade, were sent to guard the approach to Ballarat. Their instructions were to intercept any army reinforcements coming up the Melbourne road. They proved to be poor sentries, for there were several false alarms, and when the attack came at dawn on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1854 on a Sunday morning, they were not alert enough to be of any value to the defence of the Stockade.

William Hobby, of Hobby & Husted, was an American who built up a large business at Campbells Creek near Castle-

maine. He also ran a coaching service to Maryborough and Dunolly.

In 1855 - Buckeye Inn was kept by one American named John Bodkin who hailed from Springfield Ohio, a son of William and Elizabeth Bodkin. James Smith, goldminer, 38 years of age, arrived from Massachusetts. Others came from Maine, New York and Winchester - Virginia, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Philadelphia. The Americans left their mark following the gold rushes in central Victoria.

The California Bungalow was a very popular design of many houses during the 1920 to 1930s.

An area in Maryborough, where the California Gully rush occurred during our goldrush, still bears the name, even today, of a Kindergarten and local Tennis Club.

Anne Doran - Australia.

## **BIG NUGGETS - From the Golden Triangle of Victoria**

If there is one thing that excites a prospector's mind, sending it soaring to dizzying heights of imagination of untold wealth and luxury, it is big gold nuggets. From Australia to Alaska, from the jungles of Brazil to the goldfields of Papua New Guinea, in fact, the whole



world over, there is nothing like gold to bring out the best and the worst in an individual.

It was once said that 'a man can drop a 50 pound note on the ground and a nugget worth just 10 pounds, and yet it will be the nugget which is scooped up with such vehemence as if the money never existed'.

It's not hard to imagine why nuggets hold such fascination for those who chase them when you consider the size of some that have been found - lumps such as the famous "Welcome Stranger" coming in at a whopping 2.284 ounces, the "Welcome" nugget at 2.195 ounces, the Holtermann nugget/specimen at 7.560 ounces and the Blanche Barkly nugget weighing 1.743 ounces. And let us not forget the recent "Goliath" nugget from Brazil weighing a respectable 1.622 ounces.

### **GREAT CONVICTION**

It was claimed with great conviction that in the early mining days of the 1800s in Victoria, a nugget was found by some Chinese that rivaled the "Welcome Stranger". Month after month, the Chinese were reported to have sold considerable lumps to buyers, all of which had been

weeks it was residing on the opposite side of the globe. A video of this monster was shown which was well in excess of 1000 ounces.

### **FULLY SUBSTANTIATED**

A few other recent finds have been fully substantiated are 1000 plus ounces from the Pyrenees ranges district (Avoca), 900 ounces and 417 ounces from the Maryborough district in Victoria, 1800 ounces near Yandoit, 200 ounces near Moliagul.

Even though our Great Southern Land has been overly blessed with large masses of gold in the form of nuggets, there have been many other significant finds made the world over. Large nuggets have been unearthed in South Africa, Russia, Brazil, New Guinea and the USA, and even though they may not be quite as big as our Aussie thumpers, their ability to fire the imagination is right up there with the biggest. Even in the Solomon Islands, nuggets up to 10 ounces are being found on a regular basis by the locals. In New Guinea, too, new areas are opening up all the time and the amount of shallow, nuggety gold being found has to be seen to be believed. But adventurous seekers of the precious metal should note that lawlessness abounds in the goldfields of these underdeveloped countries.

### **WHAT IS A NUGGET AND WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?**

It was once thought that gold nuggets actually grew in the ground, that pieces of eroded gold from small reefs, for example a 3 ounce piece, attracted fine gold in the soil and in solution from mineral-rich ground water which somehow attached itself to the smaller bit, growing over time into the large nuggets we see today.

This theory came about when the diggers of old, while searching and exploring the reefs adjacent to rich alluvial finds where large nuggets were found, never encountered similar-sized large lumps in the quartz. This led them to believe, erroneously, that gold in large nugget form was not derived from the reefs but had grown in situ due to some form of chemical reaction. But it is true that gold can grow, and in some ways, it's understandable how the old timers came to that conclusion.

There were numerous records of gold found in crystalline form that had actually grown on carbonaceous formations such as petrified tree stumps and roots. Many examples were found in the deep leads of the Ballarat goldfields. Gold has even been grown under laboratory conditions using a carbon-based nucleus as the catalyst for the growth.

### **PROOF OF THE GROWTH THEORY**

Places such as Nuggety Gully in Dunolly or Blackwood were seen as proof of the growth theory because the reefs worked at these particular diggings only yielded fine or extremely small gold, whereas the gully workings produced numerous nuggets in the hundreds-of-ounces range. Also, the Black Dog reef at Moliagul, near where the "Welcome Stranger" gold nugget was found, never produced anything remotely approaching that monster. The 'growth theory', was also supported by the fact that many large nuggets found in the alluviums were of a slightly higher grade than gold found in the adjacent reefs.

## BIG NUGGETS - From the Golden Triangle of Victoria

For example, the gold in the auriferous drifts may have been 97 per cent pure, whereas the gold from the reefs close by, was much lower, clocking in at 93 per cent pure.



The nuggets just had to have grown; there was no other explanation. But of course, there is. The other theories, and they are ones that hold much credence, are firstly, that the gold deposited way back when was in richness in a 'V' formation, meaning that when the gold was first formed and deposited, the richest

portions of the reefs where the large masses were formed, were on or very near a surface level that now no longer exists. In many cases, hundreds of feet of the original surface have been completely eroded away. The top two-thirds, or more, of the "V" is long gone and what we now see is just the remains.

### CORRESPONDING GOLD VALUES

Secondly, with many reefs not holding corresponding gold values or nugget sizes to that of the alluviums, the large nuggets may have been formed in small 'wing veins' which ran off the sides of the main ore bodies. These acted as filters channeling and trapping the gold-rich solutions that percolated up through the main ore body, then drained back through the wings and formed huge nuggets.

Thirdly, most of many of these large nuggets were not formed in the larger reefs but in small, rich indicator veins that were in close proximity to the alluvial diggings. These indicator veins are also subject to the "V" theory where the levels now found are the remnants of the richer, larger gold-bearing original.

Fourthly, before erosion took place, the "V,s" held gold of a higher grade in their upper levels compared to the gold contained in the lower levels. It has been told that many reefs, where the deeper the mine went, the more mineralization was encountered making the extraction of the gold hardly worth the effort. The best gold was in the upper portions of the reef.

### DOZENS OF REEFS

It's also worth noting, in support of the "V" theory, that in the early days of gold recovery there were dozens of reefs worked very close to incredibly rich alluvial diggings, but which either gave out within metres of the surface or became so poor as not to warrant a further effort. The loads found were just the remnants of a once rich ore system. Here are a few facts - Out of the top 10 largest nuggets ever found, six had quartz attached to them. The "Welcome Stranger" (2.284oz) had 68 pounds of quartz, while the Dunolly lump (it never got a name that stuck) that broke into two, was said to have originally weighed 2.844 ounces, but when liberated, weighed just

1.363 ounces and was recorded as having 'much quartz attached.

The "Welcome" nugget from Ballarat (2.217oz) had 10 pounds of quartz on it. The 'Lady Hotham' from Ballarat (1.177oz) was also said to have 'much quartz attached'. The 'Sarah Sands' from Ballarat (1.117oz) had 'much quartz attached', as did 'The Poseidon' from Tarnagulla (703oz) also had 'much quartz attached'. Numerous others were also recorded as being 'much water worn' indicating, if anything, a reduction in size from the original rather than a growth.

### VISIBLE SIGNS OF ABRASION

With many of the nuggets we find, showing visible signs of abrasion, it's fair to say, that instead of them having grown, as the old theory would suggest, they have more than likely done the opposite. The fine, almost crystalline gold, which sometimes accompanies them in the surrounding clays or drifts, has more than likely, been eroded from them rather than been attracted to them, as was originally thought.

Why Australia rules the world as the king of nugget producing countries, with Victoria taking pride of place, is anyone's guess.

The same question could be asked of many other mineral deposits such as coal in Queensland, iron ore in the Kimberley, diamonds in Africa and oil in the Middle East! The fact is that, all the tell-tale signs that would have provided us with answers have long since eroded away. The hillside on which we stand today may have once been



a couple of hundred feet higher, and the mineralization in the auriferous reefs which shed the gold, very different to what we now have.

Author - Brett Turner Dunolly - Victoria - Australia  
Author's note - Many thanks to Tony Mills from (Dunolly) GoldSearch Australia for the photographs of the 53 ounce and 75 ounce nuggets.

This article was featured in the 'Australian Gold Gem & Treasure' magazine April 2008.

(Information submitted by Anne Doran)



## 2009 World Goldpanning Championships – Italy

**Ciao!**

Dear Friends in gold, here I am as C.E.O. of Biella2009 World Goldpanning Championships.

Many of you readers already know me or met me before

somewhere around our golden world ? in the past or we will meet for sure in the future.

Here in Italy we are really busy working around the event to correctly organise every piece of it. As you probably know, the World Goldpanning Championships is an incredibly huge jig-saw and in the end, actually at the opening ceremony, every piece must fit correctly into its space.

Starting to develop the project right after coming back from South Africa, where your delegates gave us the opportunity to triple Italy as host of the World, we met so many persons already involved or not, to plan and build the event itself.

From so far in the past, up to now, we have been busy at work: the Arena has now the shape we designed and the logistics are on their way. I must say in truth, we are a little late and the problem was Mr. Winter... He came really strong this very year after more than 20 years and he threw a lot of snow even on the public stands and into the pools we were building. In late February we had still ice on the ground. Anyway, we are strong enough to deal with that.

Today, when I am writing these notes, we are at work at the Arena, our "golden bowl" as we nicknamed it, to complete it before the opening of the season in Italy that is to say late March.

Hopefully we will have also a trial competition in May or June and, as the WGA Board Spring Meeting will be held in Biella, I promise I will send on the website some pictures of the President, Treasurer and both Chiefs of Com-Coms panning in the new pools!

The podium we will use at prize giving ceremony is something I am proud of, whether or not you will appreciate it ? as it is made by huge masses we found in the area. You must know the Balteo glacier, some 100.000 years ago, was the landlord in here and it brought from the Aosta Valley mountains, rocks and dirt that is now the auriferous placer of Elvo Valley. Together with that it was carrying those masses. It is history and geology and mystery. That's why.

Leaving the Arena and its works, we can talk about the organisation of "collateral events" as restaurants, facilities, campgrounds, car-parks, shuttle busses and so on. As you probably don't know, just because you weren't here before, the Arena is placed close to the Bessa border and Bessa is the former roman open cast gold mine you will probably visit while here. We are in the hamlet of Vermogno, municipality of Zubierna, a hilly land close to Biella town. But we are also among trees and hills, little rivers and streams. We are in a woodland.

Vermogno has 100 inhabitants during summers and the half during winters: there is one shop and no other meeting point if not the VermognoVive Association headquar-

ters. Now we planned to have two restaurants and bars open all day long and two others at 2km and 4km away. Then there is Zubierna with other two bars and several restaurants, connected by shuttle busses if you haven't a car to drive there. The plan is to have a campground for your tents with facilities and warm showers, several car parks areas and a surface for your camping cars to stay for the golden week with electricity available.

The whole town of Zubierna is working side by side with us to welcome you and people are enthusiastic looking forward to the event.

Biella also, it is just 15 Km away, with its 5000 beds in hotels (4\* to hostel) is waiting your bookings and we are there to answer your questions.

My personal dream is going to come true, and I will be in the first line shaking your hands while you are arriving in Biella province or at the Arena. Come forward to receive one.

Hopefully you will do the same in leaving 10 days later... I hope so.

Don't forget to visit the website [www.cercatoridoro.it](http://www.cercatoridoro.it) for updated information about the Championships as we would like to give you any details well before you arrive in Biella.

By now, please accept golden greetings from the organizing body of Biella2009 World Goldpanning Championships.

Yours,  
Arturo.

Looking for Gold in Italy  
(i.e. in Piedmont Region)

The Piedmont Region has special regulations in force regarding the gathering of minerals and, in particular, regarding gold prospecting.

Regulation n.51 (April 4th 1995) of the Region sets down rules which deal with searching for and gathering minerals for collection, didactic and scientific purposes.

According to this law, anybody not on the Regional Register of Collectors is forbidden from prospecting for gold. Moreover, a prospector may not take away more than 5 grammes a day of alluvial gold found on the rivers.

We therefore invite all those intending to prospect for gold on the rivers of Piedmont to send their names in good time to our organisation, by writing to the address [mail@cercatoridoro.it](mailto:mail@cercatoridoro.it) in order to have provisional permission for the duration of the championships.

We would also invite you to read the text of this law on the website [www.regione.piemonte.it](http://www.regione.piemonte.it) at <http://arianna.consiglioregionale.piemonte.it/ariaint/TESTO?>

LAY-OUT=PRESENTAZIONE&TIPODOC=LEGGI&LEGGE=51&LEGGEANNO=1995

It will not be difficult to receive information about places to go in search of gold along the Elvo, from Mongrando to Salussola, down as far as Carisio.

Gold prospectors are not jealous or secretive about their places in Italy and they look forward to sharing their ex-

periences with you.

How to get there?

Coming to Biella province area is quite easy.

If you are flying into Milan, Malpensa (MXP) is the nearest airport to use. At the airport you can get your rented car and drive toward Turin by two different ways on the A4.

If you are landing in Milan Linate or Milan Bergamo airports, go to the A4 and drive toward Turin too. The best way is to rent a car at the airports as maybe you will need it to drive around Biella to visit some outlet stores, different places or to go to the river banks...

Exit A4 at Carisio or Santhià toll gates and drive to Biella. If you booked your hotel in Biella, well, get into the town and find your place.

If you booked at B&B or you are our guest at free Campground in Vermogno, please go to the Goldmine Centre (Centro Miniera d'Oro) GPS N 45,50046 E 8,00764 as there you will find the infopoint and registration office. Car park available.

Close to the Centro Miniera d'Oro you will find a restaurant and a sports hall: you can have something to drink, eat and even a place to put your sleeping bag on the floor, the last one for free! There are toilets and showers. Please write us a note at [beb@cercatoridoro.it](mailto:beb@cercatoridoro.it) if you need this kind of accommodation.

Goldpanners' Arena is 2 km away.

Close to the brand new "Arena" you can find: the free camping ground, with toilets and showers, the Visitor Centre of La Bessa Park, the hamlet of Vermogno.

At about 300 metres there is the camping cars' park: please kindly write us a note at [beb@cercatoridoro.it](mailto:beb@cercatoridoro.it) if you need this kind of accommodation as the space is limited and we want to give you the best place we can.

If you are driving from France through Aosta, take the A5-A4 connection and exit at Albiano toll gate. Then drive, following the brown signs to Eco Museo dell'Oro, and you will easily get to Vermogno.

If you are coming through Switzerland from the north, i.e. coming from Simplon pass, drive down to A26 to Ghemme and then to local roads. It is easier to take the A4 at big junction A4/A26 and drive east toward Turin. Exit Santhià or Carisio (see above). See [http://maps.live.it/?mkt=it-it?](http://maps.live.it/?mkt=it-it)

### **The provisional programme**

BIELLA2009 World Goldpanning Championships

CAMPIONATO MONDIALE CERCATORI D'ORO "BIELLA2009"

Under the Patronage of the Presidency of the Piedmont Regional Council, the Tourism Councillorship of Biella Province and with the contribution of the Zubiena Municipality

Week preceding the Championships (Aug.9-14, 2009):

- "Golden Relay": as part of the project "Elvo Valley – Golden Valley", a series of gold prospecting demonstrations on the Elvo river and panning in mobile, competition-type washing pools in the villages of the Elvo Valley, ranging from the springs of Pollone to the Vercelli plain, in the village squares, involving the local community in preparation for the following week.

- Guided visits in search of the treasures of each village in the Elvo Valley, showing them to be attractive, local, tourist destinations.

- Travelling exhibition of photographs and documents on the theme: "World Goldpanning Championships 1977-2009".

## Program of Events

### **Aug. Saturday 15th**

Welcoming of participants and visitors at the Gold Mine Centre at Casale Trucchi, Zubiena;  
Opening of Information Centre and Press Office for Biella2009;  
Opening of Registration Office at the Centre, where competitors can confirm their participation;  
Free gold panning on the Elvo river and the chance for beginners to join in a "Hunt for the Gold Chip", under the guidance of expert panners from the Biella association.  
In the afternoon, dedication and inauguration of the Competitions Arena in Vermogno, Zubiena, in the presence of Local Authorities and of the President of the World Goldpanning Association, Mr. Vincent Thurkettle

### **Aug. Sunday 16th**

Welcoming of participants and visitors at the Gold Mine Centre, Casale Trucchi, Zubiena which is also the Information Centre and Press Office of Biella2009.  
Free gold panning on the Elvo River.  
Evening: Ceremony at the Biella Provincial Headquarters ( Biella town centre ) and Press Conference on the theme: "A Gold Panning Championship - Rules and Details".  
Registration of competitors continues at the Gold Mine Centre and also on-line.  
Restaurants at Arena are open and there is live music on site.

### **Aug. Monday 17th**

Registration continues in Vermogno.  
Guided walk in the Bessa, ancient open-cast gold mine of Roman times.  
Panning for gold on the Elvo River.  
Guided visits of the "Gold and Bessa" Museum and of archeological sites.  
Guided excursions on the Anza River (Anzasca Valley), visits to the ancient gold mines (underground) of Pestarena and La Guia. (N.B. This initiative is subject to having a minimum number of participants).  
9pm: Registrations close at the Vermogno office.  
9.30pm: Gala Evening at Zubiena with the opening of "Golden Week" and presentation of the XVII "Vermogno and the Bessa" as well as the IV "Festival of the Valley"- Elvo Valley, Golden Valley. All in the presence of the Mayors of participating Municipalities, the Presidents of the Mountain Communities' Associations and representatives of the Biella Provincial Authorities.  
Musical entertainment and Show in the Municipal Square; Refreshment on the spot and Midnight Pasta!

### **Aug. Tuesday 18th**

Guided walk in Bessa Park, the ancient gold mine of Roman times.  
Panning for gold on the Elvo River.  
Competitions of the day: Fun Events, such as 3 and 5-member Teams, Couples.  
Guided visit to the famous, carved erratic boulders in the company of expert Alberto Vaudagna (Author).  
Opening Ceremony of Biella2009 World Goldpanning Championships and Nations' Parade (late afternoon in Biella town centre. Shuttle bus available from the Arena and campsites).  
We are currently working out details of the ceremony's programme, as well as the evening's music and entertainment! Keep checking our website for early updates about today's program.

### **Aug. Wednesday 19th**

Official competitions of the World Goldpanning Championships get under way;  
Hoisting of the flag at the Arena in Vermogno;  
Address from the PRESIDENT of the W.G.A;  
Swearing-in of competitors and judges.  
Official category competitions at the Arena ( Qualifying heats day 1).  
International Philatelic Exhibition opens in Vermogno (stamps on gold and mineral-related themes).  
Post office opens in Vermogno: you will get the official datestamp on your post card!  
Evening: football match Cercatori d'oro vs Goldpanners at football pitch in Zubiena.  
Later on: grilled meat and drinks at the pitch. Live music on site.

### **Aug. Thursday 20th**

Official category Competitions at the Arena in Vermogno (Qualifying heats - day 2).  
Annual General Meeting of the World Goldpanning Association.  
Blues and Country - style Musical Evening in Vermogno. Restaurant on site.

### **Aug. Friday 21st**

Official category Competitions at the Arena in Vermogno (Qualifying heats - day 3).  
Delegation from the Czech Republic presents the 2010 World Goldpanning Championships.  
Musical Evening at Riviera hamlet with on-site restaurant and live music.  
Shuttle bus available to and from campground.

### **Aug. Saturday 22nd**

Exhibition of minerals at the Gold mine Centre, "Casale Trucchi", Zubiena.  
Official category Competitions at the Arena in Vermogno (Semi-finals of all categories).  
Valley Fair: Evening exhibition and Market along the brightly-lit streets of a Vermogno in party mood - featuring the very best of quality local produce.  
Musical Evening at Vermogno with on-site restaurant and final surprise...

### **Aug. Sunday 23rd**

Finals of all official category Competitions of the Biella2009 World Goldpanning Championships  
Which are Men, Women, Veterans, Under-16s, National Teams.  
Live music at the Arena all day long.  
Prize-giving ceremony and Closing ceremony at the Arena in Vermogno.  
Official speeches and handover of WGA flag to Czech Republic delegation.

Farewell Evening with music and on-site restaurant.  
Special party dedicated to volunteers.

Updated version of the program available at  
[www.cercatoridoro.it/biella2009](http://www.cercatoridoro.it/biella2009)

Organising the Biella 2009 World Goldpanning Championships and working with the other Italian Associations in planning it, represents for the Biella Goldprospectors' Association its greatest goldpanning result to date.

We would first like to let you know that we are already hard at work! In fact, we've already been busy for over a year, either at meetings or working with shovels to ensure that the Championships in Biella will be something for you to remember and keep before your eyes and in your minds and hearts.

Introducing here the provisional programme of the event, I must also say that the "old" 2001 European Championships Arena which is familiar to many of you is being enlarged. It will have its 30 pools as well as much more spectator seating and brand new toilet and shower facilities and more. It is, of course, a permanent Arena for goldpanning and I believe that only Tankavaara in Finland can make a similar claim!

This Arena will be the "heart" of the Championship itself, along with the Visitor Centre of La Basso Park (where a free camping area will be available), the Eco-Museum of Gold and the Basso, the village of Veruggio and the Basso Special Reserve which, as you know, was an open cast gold mine in Roman times.

We also plan to keep you busy in the evenings and to entertain you in your free moments.

Time is flying and August 17<sup>th</sup> 2009 is around the corner and we are waiting for you in order to show you the best of ourselves as well as our new competition site and, actually, our very warmest smiles!

We are waiting, dear friends, for YOU! So, why not contact our official travel agent and ask about booking or perhaps register in advance on our new website where you can find the updated version of programmes as well as news!

See you in Biella! Keep in touch!

Yours, Arturo Romello  
CEO BIELLA2009 W.G.C.



Biella2009

XXXIII World Goldpanning Championships W.G.A.

organised by:



and with the support of:



with the cooperation of:



BIELLA 2009



World Goldpanning Championships

FROM 15 TO 23 AUGUST



Web site [www.cercatoridoro.it/biella2009](http://www.cercatoridoro.it/biella2009)  
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# Golden Times

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

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### Visit the WGA website

<http://www.w-g-a.org>

The screenshot shows the WGA website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Home, About WGA, GT, Calendar, Past events, and Contact. Below this is a welcome message: "Welcome to the World Goldpanning Association". A paragraph states: "The World Goldpanning Association is the recognised world network for national goldpanning clubs and associations." A "What's new..." section features two items: "Latest Golden Times edition May 2008 (5MB)" and "Results and photos of the 2008 World Championships". Below this is a prompt: "Browse this website to find out about the WGA, WGA events and national gold events." The "Announced WGA World Championships" section displays logos for the "2009 World" and "2010 World Championships". On the right side, there is a sidebar with links to "Executive Board", "Petitions Committee", "Nominations Committee", "Competition rules", and "Annual Meeting".

Please report national events and information or errors to [wga\\_comms@yahoo.com](mailto:wga_comms@yahoo.com)