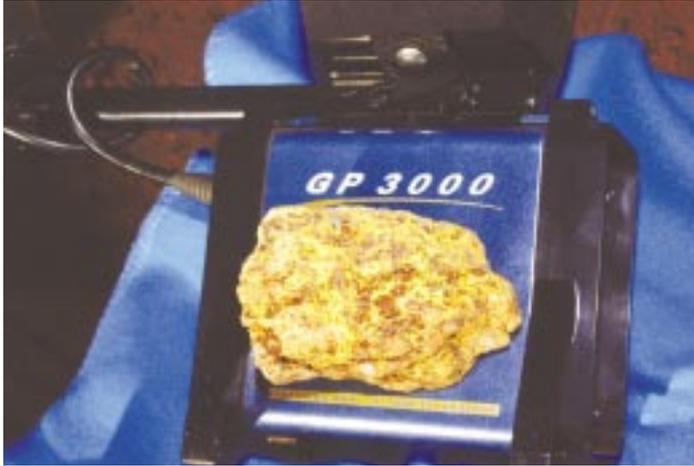


• Minelab • Times •

Success in West Australia

by Cliff Berry - NSW



No doubt most people who swing a metal detector have been asked the same question when in a goldfield van park or somewhere on the fields, - "What's the biggest piece you've ever found?" I'm sure I've had the look of disbelief many times when I've told them that I've been swinging a detector for several years and have found quite a lot of gold but haven't found a piece better than 11.8 grams.

My wife Betty and I made the trip to Western Australian goldfields in 2002 winter season and were very pleased and excited that we had done better than expected and even though we didn't get a "big one", we decided to give it another season in WA in 2003. I had just purchased a new GP 3000 whilst Betty kept her much loved GP extreme which had won her a lot of gold.

We were less than a month into our trip when Betty found two nuggets, one being 7 grams and the other 3 grams. These pieces of gold were to lead to an area and a day that every prospector dreams of. I heard a signal at the base of some small trees and after digging down 600mm on what became a huge signal, out came a hand sized quartz specimen, loaded with gold. We guessed it might have ten or twenty ounces. It proved to be 1170 gram weight containing over 18 ounces of gold. I was holding "the big one" at last. Betty soon answered the challenge and put her coil over another nice specimen containing 3.6 ounces of gold, her best piece ever also.

For the rest of the trip we detected another 15 ounces of gold, thanks to the superb performance of our Minelab machines. I felt the GP 3000 has a definite edge over my previous GP extreme, more stable threshold, handles hot ground better and gives excellent signal response, - I love it.

So to those who haven't found "A big one" yet, my advice is to learn as much as you can about operating your machine and the country that produces gold and of course the most important thing, keep swinging - every swing is one swing closer to the next "Big - One".



Not a bad weekend!

A couple of photos [above] of our two most recent trips to the goldfields. The first trip was 2 days with four of us sharing 2 detectors, one detector operator and one digger per team. The second trip was also only 2 days, we only went up to peg the ground and only had a limited time away from work.

Total weight was 24oz nuggets and 226oz of specimens which contained 156 oz of gold. The biggest piece was 70 oz but heaps of little bits.

Rob Anderson

Field Testing The GP 3000

by Nenad Lonc

The GP 3000 was released in April this year, and replaces the GP extreme. The refinements incorporated into the new model are a direct result of customer feedback, and early reports from around Australia have been more than positive. Initial testing was done in WA, VIC and here in SA, but it wasn't until the first production models were released that I actually got the chance to go over some old spots with one. Like many other users around the country, what I noticed was a detector that was very similar to a GP extreme, yet different in many small but significant ways.

Ergonomically speaking, the GP3000 just looks the part. The traditional white coil with shorter cable, a strong and wobble-free one-piece shaft, and a greatly improved battery harness are all welcome changes and alone make the detector a pleasure to use. The smart point plug, which is used by Minelab to individually check each unit through computer testing software, is peace of mind that your detector is working to specification. One feature that won't help you find gold is the new gold artwork, but I found it looks great when photographed with some gold nuggets (see photo).

The most important feature on the GP3000 is that it delivers where it counts most – in the field. Operation wise it is almost identical to its predecessor, the GP extreme, but its performance has been tweaked. The first thing I noticed with the GP3000 is that the ground balance is very smooth, and when operating in Fixed, it seems to hold the setting for longer, requiring less-frequent ground balancing. As in the past, in some areas even when using the Double D setting, the mineralisation changes are just too frequent to operate the unit in Fixed so the Auto Tracking is there to solve the problem.



While operating the unit in Tracking, I found that it kept up with very broad mineralisation changes with ease, and signals from hot rocks, clay domes, and buried charcoal had disappeared. Another feature most welcome on the GP 3000 is the improvement in threshold stability. Minelab put a lot of work into improving upon the smoothness of the threshold, and the benefits of a smoother background hum are: a) improved signal response, b) better recognition of faint deep signals, c) better stability in hotter soils and d) less ear fatigue.

Going over old ground I'd been to before in the Adelaide Hills, the GP 3000 produced more gold, and by concentrating on areas with the worst mineralisation, I found a lot more targets in ground where I had detected many times previously. During a recent trip to Victoria with the GP 3000, by sticking to the old diggings, I found several nuggets ranging from .1 of a gram to 2 grams at very good depths. All of the signals were very faint, only slightly louder than the threshold tone, and I would've missed most of them had the threshold not been so smooth.

Overall, I am quite proud of the GP3000, and look forward to finding a lot more gold with it!

Never Give Up

It was October when a mate and I headed for the Golden Triangle to try our luck. We had been to all the usual spots on previous trips and picked up the occasional nuggets, always enough to keep us looking forward to the next outing. I had heard of some good gold coming from Moliagul area and hadn't detected there before, so we decided it was a good place to start.

We left Warnambool early in the morning and on reaching Moliagul we drove around looking at a few spots but weren't too impressed until I spotted a low slope covered by diggings just above a dry creek bed. I pulled the GP out and set off full of enthusiasm.

A couple of hours later saw us both back at camp with a cup of hot coffee and no gold, but still plenty of ground just begging to be detected. After the coffee break, my mate headed up the slope and I started on the diggings above the creek. After detecting the diggings for a while, I decided to try along the dry creek bed. Halfway back to the car, I got a signal but because it was at the base of the creek wall I thought "probably another bit of junk, but I might as well dig it, one lucky last before lunch". I did! - after 20 minutes of hard digging and a hole 18" deep, I was holding this lovely nugget, total weight of 21 oz. The moral of this story is to work hard, concentrate, listen carefully and never give up.

Jim of Warnambool



54.5 Ounce Beauty

I was detecting between the road and a fence at Wedderburn where I had previously found a 5 gram piece. The whole area was covered in rusty tin cans, so I borrowed a leaf rake and cleared a sizable area. I then detected the area and found a total of 64 nuggets plus this beauty that weighed 54.5oz by itself.

Max



Amazing Depth

In September my wife and I spent 10 days detecting at Tibooburra and Milparinka in NSW "Corner Country", detecting with my GP, ground that has been flogged to death. I was totally amazed at the depth at which I was constantly digging very small nuggets. In all I dug 287 pieces for a total weight of 1 1/4 ounces. The GP was so stable and signals so clear, it is the best detector I have ever owned.

Bob Foote, NSW



How to keep getting gold in the HEAT!!!

by Nenad

As the summer months approach us, the heat can get quite excessive in some of the goldfield locations around Australia. Rather than just waiting for summer to pass, using some common sense and safety precautions will allow you to continue with your hobby right through. This article aims on providing a few suggestions on how to keep swinging during the warmer months.

Summer Dangers

Detecting in the heat of summer can be dangerous, as heat exhaustion and dehydration can occur a lot faster. It is therefore crucial that you don't get lost, sprain your ankle, or run out of water. Here are a few tips that will help.

1. Night detecting can be a wise alternative in the bush. Gone are the dangers of sunburn and heat exhaustion plus your detector will often operate more smoothly and with less electrical interference. Some precautions do need to be used however. (1) Carry a GPS and/or stay close to camp so that you do not lose your bearings in the dark. (2) Stay away from old mineshaft areas, and (3) Wear a lightweight miners torch. Some of the newer ones on the market have adjustable lights, that run on just 3 x AAA batteries and will provide over 100 hours of runtime.

2. As the old saying goes, "Mad dogs & Englishmen go out in the midday sun". Detecting during early morning and as the sun goes down is often cooler and much more relaxing than during the middle of the day. Detect for a few hours in the morning, and then

a few hours before dark. This way you will avoid the worst heat of the day, and a rest in the shade, with a cool drink will work wonders.

3. Use a good GPS and compass, as it is vital that you don't get lost. If you are without these aids, avoid exploring new areas that you are unfamiliar with.

4. Wear light clothing that is breathable. Light cotton blends are best, and avoid nylon and polyester as they tend to hold in your body heat, and won't soak up any sweat.

5. Carry a good supply of water and make sure you keep sipping continuously throughout the day. Regular sips are of more benefit to the body than big drinks spasmodically – we're not camels. Large army drink bottles in woollen padded pouches keep water nice and cool.

6. Concentrate your efforts on smaller gold - i.e. slow, methodical detecting with smaller coils, will mean less walking and digging. Less effort keeps your body temperature down, which helps to keep your fluids up. No point going out patch finding with a big coil as you will get tired more easily.

7. Wear lightweight or under-chin headphones that allow your ears to breathe, as you will quickly begin to sweat with fully enclosed, tight fitting headphone cups. Alternatively, you can use an external speaker set-up.

8. To avoid being stranded in the bush due to snake bite, make sure you make a lot of noise when walking around, as this is usually enough to scare any snakes off. Also, as most snakes will attack around the ankles and lower leg areas it is wise to wear snake guard protection sleeves, known as gatters, which are available from most camping shops.

9. As mentioned previously, falling and injuring yourself in the summer heat is far more dangerous so you should exercise extra caution. Wearing comfortable high cut hiking boots will go a long way to staying sturdy on your feet, and ultimately get back to your vehicle safely.

10. Lastly, avoid drinking coffee before heading out, as it will dehydrate your body. Cool tea is a much better alternative.

So, if the gold bug has bitten you badly, then hopefully the points just mentioned will help you to get some gold, even when the heat is on.

Another popular alternative during summer is beach detecting. Beaches are constantly being replenished with lost coins and jewellery, and are the logical alternative for people who do not have any goldfields nearby. However, beach detecting during the day in summer also has its downsides - sunburn, windburn, electrical interference and big crowds. It is better to detect beaches after nightfall, on the lower tide, with less people, and usually calmer seas, as well as being out of the sun.

My Most Interesting Find?

This story begins at a unique place I've deemed to be my favourite detecting spot. What first attracted me to the location was the ramblings on of an old-timer and about the roughest mud map you've ever clapped your eyes on.

Gold was the target, and my usual dreams of busting the suspension on the car, in an effort to get it home were as rampant as always. I did find gold there, but they were all small, my father has twice this amount holding his teeth together.

Enter phase 2 - I started to find military nick-knacks. Badges, buttons and bullets, not just a couple mind you, by the kilogram. So at this stage I'd decided that not only was this a gold mine worked in the 1890's, it was also a military training ground.

Enter phase 3 - One recent Sunday, I arrived early as always, got the detector out and started wandering around contented with my loose grid pattern. About 10 minutes later I'd located a mouse-like signal and proceeded to knock off the first few inches of turf. Something was way down there I thought, maybe a patch of mineralisation or perhaps China. Sixty five centimetres of sweat later, I was confronted with a stencil like piece of tin reading "L.B. Isaac" on top, followed by the number 9 in the middle and Sydney across the bottom. Assuming that the missing pieces of the stencil were still in the hole, I waved the magic wand again, only this time to be confronted by a totally different sound. Lying underneath the broken stencil was a small pile of coins stacked ever so neatly on top of each other.

The coins I found were:-

- British Florin (no visible date but will be 1852 - 1887) • 1888 Sixpence
- 1910 Florin • 1913 Florin • 1917 Florin (x3) • 1921 Star date shilling
- 1934 Palestinian 5 Mils coin (punctured)

Now how unusual is that? I had a great time finding all these coins & badges, almost as exciting as gold nuggets. Can anyone figure out the stencil or the Palestinian coin? If you have any ideas forward them to us at Minelab and we'll pass them onto Chris.



The Golden Triangle Home of the big ones!

Rumours of a large nugget between 300 to 500oz found in Dunolly in October this year seem fairly definite. The story reported in the Herald Sun, October 18th goes that a contractor while digging drainage trenches, took a break and used his detector to check out the excavated dirt and walls of the trench, located the monster.

Dunolly is in the heart of Victoria's Golden Triangle and is noted for the number of large nuggets that have been found in the area. Kingower where the "Hand of Faith" was found and Moliagul, home of the "Welcome Stranger" are both just up the road, and anyone visiting the Railway Hotel in Dunolly is likely to hear of nuggets from a few ounces up to 60, 80 or 100 oz being found in the area.

WWII gold in PNG

It has been recently reported that Papua New Guinea defence forces were dispatched into the remote mountains seeking a stash of World War 2 gold hidden in a cave.

Stories of Japanese gold being hidden during the war, similar to the Philippines, have been around for years. This hoard was first reported by a mountain man, who claimed finding rotting wooden crates with gold bars, hidden deep within a cave. The Government took it seriously enough to dispatch a helicopter & police to confirm the truth and give protection if true.



23 oz Kangaroo

"By the time we had wrestled this beauty from the clutches of the sticky clay, we sat back in the shade and stared in sheer disbelief at prettiest nugget I have ever found.

735 grams (23oz) shaped like a kangaroo."

Marion - Vic

The West Australian Detecting Championships!

Long weekend in September each year is the time for all detectorists worth their salt to test their skills at the West Australian Detecting Championships. This is no treasure hunt where luck plays a part in finding a lucky key, this is an equal competition where all combatants go head to head on equal terms.

The playing field of this competition is at Coolgardie WA, one of the original West Australian goldfields and a great place to detect nuggets in-between the competition events. An area of the local golf course has been cleared and graded smooth for the competition and this area is then divided up into about 20 rectangles of 20m x 20m each. These rectangles (1 to 20) are then each dissected from corner to corner thus giving four triangles of about equal area and numbered off as "A"; "B"; "C"; & "D".

Contestants draw the number of the rectangle they are to detect and are given 20 minutes to detect the number of targets buried in each of the four triangles. The skill comes in counting the correct number of targets, missing none while not counting the same one twice. Organisers are not backward in making life difficult by placing two or three targets close together or close to boundaries. No digging is required and the number of targets the contestants counts in each zone is marked on their score card. Ranking is worked out as a percentage for accuracy with points deducted for missed or extra counts.

Minelab have sponsored the West Australian Metal Detecting Championships since their inception in 2000, giving away a top of the range GP 3000 or equivalent as first prize. But the value of the competition is not just winning one of the many prizes, it is in testing your skills and learning from the different techniques employed by others. In the down time between events, everyone mingles around talking techniques, latest modifications, how they went through the season, areas to go and other general chit-chat.

A traditional treasure hunt is also conducted during these breaks where contestants detect for a huge array of prizes.

It's a great time for all and extremely well run by the Coolgardie volunteers. Make sure that you mark on your calendar now to be in Coolgardie on September long weekend for next years championships and I'll see you there.



New Building in Adelaide



In August 2003, Minelab's new expanded office and factory building at Torrensville, SA was completed. This new facility almost doubles the size of the existing building and has allowed us to close satellite buildings that we were occupying in various locations in other suburbs. By drawing all Australian operations into the one location, efficiencies in communication and quality control will be greatly improved.



Laying down on the job

After detecting this 320 gr (10.3 oz) nugget with his GP 3000 and then digging it up, Peter felt he earned a bit of a sitdown.

Peter Pearson - NSW

Coming Soon:

Regular Minelab Newsletters will soon be available by e-mail. These will outline industry news, new product releases, customer feedback & much more.

So that we can keep in better communication with you our customers, Minelab will be introducing "The Minelab News", email newsletter. This is a free service from Minelab and will be sent to anyone with an email address and who requests it. To have the Minelab News regularly sent to you, all you need do is send us your name and email address to: ho@minelab.com.au with a subject title marked Minelab News.

If at any time you wish to cease receiving the Minelab News, just send us an email requesting to be taken off the list.

Minelab reserves the right to respond to ongoing technical progress by introducing changes in design, equipment and technical features at any time. Certain descriptions and illustrations may differ from the exact model purchased.



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