

• Minelab • Times •

Father & Son in OUTBACK WA

After many years of prospecting with my son Brett and groups of hopefuls on Safaris in WA with John Dyer from NSW, and other prospecting trips with friends, the lure of the bush and another nugget remains as strong as ever.

Over the years Brett and myself have graduated from hire detectors of the XT 17000 and SD2100 ranges to now being the proud owners of the superb Minelab GP Extreme and an SD2200D, soon to be upgraded to the new Minelab 3000.

We have never found any rich patches and have patiently battled boredom and false alarms from rubbish left behind by early miners. You name it, we have found it, including some gold.

Great times around the campfire make every trip a reward in itself and the odd nugget adds to the enjoyment.

Our trips have taken us from Leonora, Laverton and Darlot in central WA to as far north as the Gascoyne region. It's a big, big, big state and any trip is a major exercise. One that requires sound planning and selection of areas that have produced gold in the early days, and can be expected to produce more if you are patient and lucky. Because of the long distances involved we unfortunately don't have time to search for new gold bearing areas.

This year I plan two trips to outback WA. Firstly I will join John Dyer in his 2 weeks annual safari and say hello to old friends. Then later in the year, around August, I will head way up north for a first time visit to the Marble Bar region and possibly off the beaten track to the Nullagine area.

In these areas it is important to carry spares for all risks to equipment and yours truly, and I don't just mean plenty of beer. In fact I would not tackle these areas on my own in summer, leave that to the professionals.

My enthusiasm to head bush again was given a kick start last year, on 14 June 2003 to be exact, when I found a nice nugget up north in WA.

The photo says it all. "Winners are Grinners".

Before anybody rushes off to the West to find a beauty like this one, let me tell you I found nothing for the next 2 days in the same area. Funny stuff this gold!

My upgrade to the new Minelab 3000 is not without a level of excitement because the GP Extreme is such a wonderful detector. It has excellent control of background noise in hot mineralised areas and the new level of discrimination is a blessing. Now we have the 3000 and my feet are itching already.

Well that's it for now. Will have a new Minelab 3000 for next trip and reckon my son Brett is keen to beat the old man after my good luck on 14 June 2003.

Trevor Johnson (WA)



The Golden Stone Fish



Any of you who were reading the West Australian on 4th May this year would have seen the photo of Dan, Ian & Mike with their beautiful 7.2kg nugget that they have named "The Golden Stonefish"

You will read the full story in a future Australian Gold Gem & Treasure magazine, but the short story of it was this.

Dan, Ian & Mike are prospectors in West Australia, Dan and Mike have been detecting for 20 odd years but Ian had only been out 3 times previously and this was the first occasion the three friends had been out together. They had chosen a spot north of Kalgoorlie as their "likely spot" and prepared well before hand by obtaining all the relevant permits from the Mining Company.

It ended up that new-chum Ian was the one who actually detected the nugget, at first believing it was just more rubbish but after some serious digging pulled it out. Due to its shape and being found in the bank of a dry creek bed, they have called it "The Golden Stonefish", full weight 7.2kg.



A Day with the Minelab Adventure Club Field Trainer.



The morning awoke in glorious sunshine, the rain we had had overnight had cleared to leave a crisp morning, I was rearing to go. Today I was booked to meet up with other prospectors and the Minelab field trainer to be shown the finer points on my new detector.

I've been detecting now for about 5 years but just recently I up-graded my old detector for a new GP 3000 and as part of the deal, Minelab have organised an experienced operator to explain the best way to use their new technology.

We all met at a prearranged spot from where convoy fashion we followed our trainer into the bush. The track was good and even the guys in two wheel drive had no difficulty driving in. While things were being set up – tables, detectors, instruction sheets, we had a chance to talk between ourselves. There were about 10 of us, some new to the hobby and others like me reasonably experienced.

After a quick introduction we were into the course. The day is set up so that beginners or experienced alike can benefit from it. The first few minutes are putting the detector together, little hints for the newbies how to care for your detector and prevent later problems with leads and headphones, etc. He even offered ideas on how to make it comfortable and less tiring. Then into the controls, knobs & switches. This is really what I wanted to hear. Slowly, switch by switch these were explained not only what it was there for but explained how it worked, much easier to understand than sitting and reading the manual. By understanding how the switch was working, I was better informed how & when to use it in its different positions. The trainer was really great, anyone who didn't understand or had questions were answered clearly and with great patience.

After we'd completed all the knobs and switches so out came the tea, coffee and biscuits. After morning tea, the course got onto different search techniques, how to search if patch finding and how to slow down and grid an area that gold had been found in, how to pinpoint and find the target, with lots of practical suggestions especially for the beginner. This still left us with about an hours detecting before lunch so we all grabbed our own machines and put our new knowledge to practice. Meanwhile the trainer walked from person to person, chatting to us and giving further personal explanations depending on our own level of knowledge.

A break for lunch saw us all sitting around in a circle, chatting about our own background, relating stories we'd heard and generally getting to know each other.

After lunch we looked at various coils and other accessories and learned what their advantages were and when one was better than another for specific purposes or terrain. That was just long enough to settle our lunch but we were all eager to get some more detecting time in, so back into searching. The spot we were taken too was right on the goldfields with obvious diggings down in the gully and plenty of scope for hunting the hill sides all around. Everyone was again given individual time & advice.

In the course of the afternoon there were three nuggets found, one very small one well less than a gram, another about 1.5 gram and a third one which was about 5 gram and really had everyone excited when it turned up.

Overall I really enjoyed the day and yes, even though I would credit myself as being well experienced, I certainly learnt a lot about the new machine. I'm sure without this training it would have taken me a lot longer to fully understand some of the new functions and even some of the knobs that I thought I understood, I found I didn't really understand how they were working. A training day that was very informative and lots of fun.

150 Year Celebration of the Eureka uprising.

On 26th November 1854, the gold miners in Ballarat raised a stockade of logs, wagons and other impediments and took up arms within the Stockade to draw attention to their grievances and demands.

The Eureka Stockade rebellion was a short-lived and in some ways unspectacular event but in Australian History it is hugely significant. Not only for the fact that it was the only time citizens of Australia took up arm against the then Government, but probably more importantly, it was directly from this event that Australia's social structure was formed. The right to vote and have political representation for the common man, the opening up of land to private ownership, even the breaking down of the class structures inherent in England, can all be traced to this event.

This year 2004, marks the 150th anniversary of the Eureka uprising. Celebrations are being planned throughout the Victorian goldfields and Ballarat in particular have numerous events culminating in the big celebration on 26th November.



For more information visit www.eurekaballarat.com.

Rockerama 2004

The annual Rockerama was held at Palmer SA is part of the old town site and organisers supplement the existing trash & treasure by planting new items including coins, badges, and the lucky keys. Prizes are awarded to the person who finds the most targets, the most interesting artefact, the most coins, etc. This year the most interesting items found were a 1876 threepence and a old copper/brass broach which was estimated to be from the same period. Over 90 prizes were awarded so almost everyone went home with a prize.

The whole weekend is very well run by the local lapidary and detecting club, with tailgaters and caravaners' spending the weekend selling and swapping their mineral and rock specimens. On Sunday everyone's detectors emerge from the latest models to the 20 year old faithfuls for the treasure hunt. This treasure hunt is open to everyone no matter what their skills and areas are set aside for the kids to have their own go. The area for the hunt

This year the winner of the Minelab Sovereign Elite was Helen Parker and Luigi del Giacco took home the Minelab Musketeer Advantage.



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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The GP 3000 that paid for itself in 2 Weeks



Back in the first week of June last year, I was talking to a friend in the street and he mentioned that he'd heard good reports on Minelab's new GP 3000 and was having one delivered up from Miners Den. Not to be outdone, I decided then and there that I just had to have one too, so I raced to the phone box and phoned Geoff to see if he could send up another one. Well true to their word my new GP 3000 was delivered the next day which was 7th June.

The next day I set about getting used to the new controls and the day after I took it to a gully not far from home, where I had been having some luck with my SD 2200. This gully has been well and truly done over by myself and yet I did manage to find 3 small pieces for 2.5gram. This was a good result so I thought I'd begin in earnest to check other areas close to home. From the 7th June to the 20th June I had found 11 pieces for a total of 22.1 gram which wasn't bad considering I was still getting used to the machine.

On the 23rd June I decided to experiment with trying some new settings while working very close to home. I began searching near an ancient knurled Greybox tree and as I searched around it's base, I got a faint signal while waving over what appeared to be a small quartz rock. I took out my pick and tried to drive it under the small rock only to find that only about 5% was showing above ground and that it was in fact a very large quartz rock.

When I did pry it out, I saw a gold coin in the dirt where the rock had been, I slid the blade of my pick under the dirt and out came not one, but a great stack of Gold Sovereigns all neatly stacked one on top of each other. It turned out to be 47 Sovereigns with the oldest being a British William IV 1832 and the youngest was Queen Victoria 1877, there were 11 Sydney Mint as well. Although none were rare, I still class this as a find of a lifetime, and all thanks to the Minelab GP 3000.

Ironbark Bill (Vic)

How Big are the Goldfields

Over the last 20 years or so, a common question has always been asked "Is there gold still out there?" The common belief is that surely all the gold has already been found. Recently I was shown a map that put all this into perspective.

I guess nothing shows just how vast and huge our country is, as when compared to all of Europe. This map shows the state of Western Australia at the same scale as that of Europe. Obviously it would take decades of detecting for our relatively limited number of detectorists to carefully cover just this one state. If we then add the rest of Australia, plus the fact that each time an improved model of detector comes out, we go back to our favourite sites again and lastly the fact that most of us walk around like Brown's cows, rather than systematically working an area, I'm sure you'll agree there is still plenty of exploring to be done.



Comparison size of W.A.

Map courtesy of Trevor Johnson

Club Member's Lost Keys Returned!!

Minelab received a call from a country general store owner, saying he found a set of lost keys and got our 1800 number from the attached Adventure Club key ring. He gave us the 4-digit membership number recorded on the key ring, and by doing a search on our database we found the phone number for the customer, and phoned to let him know where he can find his missing keys! - So make sure you put your keys on your membership key-ring now.

Beth Pulbrook - (NSW)

Nuggets found in just a few weeks with her first ever detector.

Good hunting Beth!



How to best use the Soil and Boost Switch on the GP 3000.

Talking to customers, there is often confusion and misunderstanding exactly what happens when searching in various positions of the Soil and Boost switches. For this reason I thought it worth-while explaining exactly what is happening with each of these controls.

Soil Control (Sensitive / Normal / Salt)

The GP3000 & its predecessor the GP extreme are unlike any gold detector on the market, because unlike the SD series, you have the ability to change the electronic "timing" or pattern of the pulses, to optimise the detector for different soil conditions, and/or desired target sizes. This pulse pattern can be changed via the Soil switch, and can make a big improvement to your finds!

As you would be aware, all SD and GP detectors use MPS or multi-period sensing as their primary technology. Put simply, this means that the detector transmits electro-magnetic pulses at varying timing and patterns. Simplistically, certain combinations of pulse patterns (timings) have a particular affinity to certain soil conditions, (be it magnetic/alkali/neutral,etc) and on different target sizes & conductivities. By using the Soil switch, changes to the timings can be made to improve the performance in specialised areas.

Normal Position.

As the name would suggest, the timing used in Normal mode gives you the best performance on a wide range of soil conditions, and will provide the best depth on a wide variety of target sizes. This is the mode you will use most of the time, and you should always use this mode in new areas where you are unsure of the soil mineralisation, and the depth of targets.

Sensitive Position

The Sensitive mode timings have been optimised for an improved response on smaller, shallow nuggets. There is a slight loss of depth on bigger targets in this mode, so you should not use Sensitive when seeking out large deep nuggets. Sensitive mode does however smooth out the threshold in highly mineralised

ground, so works well in conjunction with accessory coils like the 11inch or 8 inch mono-loop, or using the Coil switch on the GP in Mono (or Enhanced) mode.

Salt Position

The effect of alkaline Salt mineralisation is vastly different to the effect of ironstone and mineralised clays so common in Australian goldfields. Anyone who detects in Western Australia will know the huge salt flats that have been so difficult to detect in the past, but salt can also be a problem in other parts of Australia. The timings used in Salt mode have been specially selected to work well in soils containing higher than average amounts of Salt. In these areas, Normal mode should be tried first, but if the threshold is too unstable, then better performance will be obtained in Salt mode.

Salt mode attempts to reject the response from salt and may have a slight loss in signal response to smaller targets, but the response on larger items remains relatively unaffected and background noise is minimized. Because of this fact, when searching for large deep nuggets in highly mineralised soil using the optional 18" coils, the Salt mode can be used to obtain a smoother threshold, allowing you to hear those mellow deep nugget signals.

One key thing to remember is to: re-ground balance the detector after making any changes to the Soil switch!

Boost Control (Shallow / Normal / Deep)

The boost switch, built into the GP 3000, is not a simple audio amplifier. These, external amplifiers, often sold under the name of Boosters, have no way of knowing which noises should be increased and which should be suppressed, so they increase everything without enhancing the signal to noise ratio. They are however, still quite useful, particularly to the hard of hearing, but with some limitations.

The GP 3000 is able to recognise the target signal due to specific characteristics like the length of target signal response or decay, and boost the strength of signal to make it more pronounced.

Normal Position:

The Normal Boost position is a standard non-enhanced position and suitable for general detecting environments.

Shallow Position:

The shallow position recognises the sharper signal response from smaller targets close to the surface and enhances these signals to be more easily heard. Shallow position is best used in quiet ground or to pinpoint tiny targets as in highly mineralised ground it can become noisy. It often works well in conjunction with sensitive mode on the Soil switch.

Deep Position :

In the Deep position the detector looks for the longer target responses associated with deep targets, then using software filters, boosts the positive target signal without increasing the background noises. This enhances the strength of the target signal making it easier to hear. Deep position is great for detecting deep targets in highly mineralised soil or areas littered with hot-rocks.



Gold Specimen found in North Queensland

Christian Seber from Pinzgau in Austria, has been camping at the Kingsborough Lodge at Kingsborough, North Qld. "Ikes at Kingsborough" as the place is generally known, is operated by Ike Sjöfors and has had many interesting visitors, as his guestbook shows. Many come there to enjoy the quiet and relaxing atmosphere. Others come and visit to do some gold prospecting with detectors or do some gold panning.

After trying for a few weeks with a cheap detector, Chris went to see George Mayer at the Nth Qld Miners Den in Cairns. He purchased a new top of the line Minelab GP 3000 metal detector. Prior to his arrival in Australia he had never detected before in his life.

A few days of getting used to his new detector and he had

located one particular spot that looked interesting, so the next morning he headed back to do a bit more exploring. After arriving he detected for a while getting the odd signal, mostly from old junk, until his detector gave another beep. His heart momentarily missed a few beats when he uncovered this big gold specimen. After many days of digging untold number of holes, mostly for worthless rusty iron objects and only the odd nugget, he finally found something of great value and beauty. When a specific gravity test was done the specimen weighed in at 35oz of gold.

Now he will be able to tell a few good stories about his adventures and great fortune in Nth Qld. This is one happy camper that will never forget his visit to Australia.



Minelab – Always a leg ahead of the competition.

In October 2002, I received a call from a guy, who wanted to know if I had a detector that would work under water, being a Minelab Dealer (USA) for some years and having one in stock, I said yes how can I help you, he then explained that a friend of his had lost his prosthesis leg while jet skiing up in a Mountain Lake, and if I would be interested in



trying to locate it, I asked about the clarity of the water, he said it is very bad, turned out there had been two searches for the leg already. Due to one foot visibility and the fact the lake bottom is deep silt, no one could find the leg.

I called a friend, Mike Beach, who I gold dredged with for many years and asked if he would like to go do a recovery with scuba gear and his Excalibur, he said you bet. We suited up and hit the water, and began to grid the area where the leg was lost. Forty five minutes after entering the water behold the Minelab Excalibur did it's job, Mike came to surface with the leg held high above his head, the cheers went up.

We left the site, came home and we called the owner of the leg, Will Houdyshell. He was elated so we set a time for the next day to return the leg to him, needless to say he was happy to have his leg back where it belonged.

Thanks to Mike who did the dive with me, and thanks to Minelab for such a great Detector as the Excalibur, a great machine for a difficult job. Just remember, if you want a leg up on the competition get a Minelab.

Winter beachcombing

When it comes to beach detecting, the common misconception is that it is only a summer activity. While it is true that modern coins are generally more plentiful during the busy season, I have found that the heavier, and usually more valuable items are better located during the cooler months. The main reason for this is that items lost in the soft sand, in particular the heavy more valuable items such as \$2 & \$1 coins, and most gold jewellery, will quickly find their way down to the moist hard packed sand underneath. Depending on the beach, the soft sand layer can be up to 1m deep or even more. Now if a detector operator was to go detecting the morning after a busy beach day, most of these heavier targets will be out of range, and a beach that looked like a treasure chest on a 36 degree day, can disappoint those keen operators who get up early the next morning to pick up any lost goodies.

Most beach operators find lots of coins after a hot day, but the items that sink out of range of our detectors will accumulate right through the warmer months. It is only when a combination of high tides and strong winds remove the layer of soft sand, bringing the heavy and generally more valuable targets within

reach of our detectors. In order to learn what weather conditions bring favourable results, you should visit local beaches after strong storms, noting what the prevailing wind was, and seeing which locality suffered the greatest amount of sand loss. Learning which winds are most effective will enable you to predict which beaches will be most profitable, which will allow you to bring home the goodies right through the cooler months.

In most locations, the fact that it can be a bit on the cold side means the detector operator will usually have the beach all to themselves. The other benefit of winter detecting is that there is a lot less trash to contend with, in particular aluminium foil, so you can wind down the discrimination on your detector, and reduce the risk of missing fine gold jewellery. Some operators I have spoken to, have regularly found over \$100 in coins in a single session between high tides; not to mention the value of Gold items recovered.

So keep a close eye on the weather, and when your favourite beach loses a bit of sand, be prepared for some hectic digging, and warm up that coin tumbler!!