

Gold nugget found in Scotland is sold at auction

One of the largest gold nuggets ever found in Scotland has fetched over £14,000 at auction in Edinburgh – doubling its estimate.

The 31.23g chunk was found in a river in the Scottish Borders by a gold hunter using a technique known as sniping, which involves wearing a dry suit and snorkel and lying face-down in the water.

The amorphously shaped piece measures roughly 31 x 22 x 5mm, making it one of the biggest Scottish nuggets ever recorded for size.

It went under the hammer at Bonhams' Scottish and Celtic Sale in Melville Crescent, where international interest from specimen collectors and others saw the price soar past its £5000-7000 estimate.

A private Scottish collector bought the rare nugget for £14,080, making the successful bid in the auction room against a keen rival on the phone.

Rebecca Bohle, Bonhams' specialist, said: "At over 31 grams, this gold nugget is one of the largest ever found in Scotland, so I was not surprised to see such strong interest.

"There was very competitive bidding in the room and on the phones, including interest from the UK and Europe.

"The successful bid was made by an individual from Scotland

bidding in the room. We are delighted with the price achieved.”

It is understood that the buyer – whose winning bid equates to £450.85 per gram of Scottish gold – intends to use the rare nugget to create a piece of jewellery.

The nugget was consigned by an enthusiast who has panned and sniped for gold for more than 20 years. The seller wishes to remain anonymous, while the exact location where he found the nugget is also being kept secret.

Ms Bohle added: “Gold is not easy to find in Scotland and consequently it is rare to find such a large nugget. The finder is something of an expert.”

Scottish gold has international appeal because of its rarity, and nuggets have the highest value. No two nuggets are the same and any find weighing over a gram is considered “exceptionally lucky”.

Sniping is regarded as the purest method for extracting gold as hunters are not required to move a lot of material and even the tiniest specks, magnified under the water, catch the eye.

Remarkably, the 31.23g piece was part of a larger collection offered from the same finder, including smaller nuggets and dozens of flakes, which also made impressive sums.

One smaller nugget weighing 3.32g fetched £512, while a collection of small nuggets and flakes with a gross weight of 15.4g made £1408.

The finds were all made by the same gold hunter over a number of years by sniping, face down in rivers.

The same individual found one of the biggest nuggets ever found in Britain. The gold, dubbed the Douglas Nugget, weighed 85.7g and is now on display in the Hunterian museum at the University of Glasgow.



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Rare Scottish gold nugget 31.23 grams_04.JPG

ONE OF THE LARGEST GOLD NUGGETS FOUND IN SCOTLAND, THIS 31.23 GRAM CHUNK WAS FOUND IN A RIVER IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS BY A GOLD HUNTER USING A TECHNIQUE KNOWN AS SNIPING. IT FETCHED £14,080 – OVER DOUBLE THE £7000 UPPER ESTIMATE – AT AUCTION. THE SUM IS EQUIVALENT TO OVER £450 PER GRAM OF GOLD. SEE STORY FROM GEORGE MAIR, SALTIRE NEWS, 07703 172 263

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