

# THE ROYAL TOUCH

Welsh gold is one of the rarest precious metals in the world and a favourite of the British Royal family. Lauren Steventon tells us why...

Think Wales and you might think daffodils, leeks, dragons and vowels. Lots and lots of vowels. You might even mention mining - after all, the valleys are well known for their coal, copper and slate production. But gold? Few people know that beneath the green hills of Wales lie deposits of some of the rarest and most expensive gold on the planet.

Part of this desirability comes from the unpredictable nature of the Welsh gold seams. According to purveyors of Welsh gold Clogau, one miner compared finding gold in most mines around the world to "finding the cream in a sponge cake. Finding Welsh gold, on the other hand, is like finding the sixpence in the biggest Christmas cake you could imagine. There's no pattern, no logic and you never know when you're just inches away." The sporadic nature of the deposits explains the intermittent nature of gold mining in Wales - and why it isn't the first

**CLOGAU HEARTSTRINGS NECKLACE AND EARRINGS SET**  
£129, PAGE 87



**CLOGAU LOVE VINE CUFF BANGLE**  
£199, PAGE 87



thing you might think of.

Gold was discovered in the Clogau copper mine in the early 20th Century in a rich new seam which went on to produce almost 2.5 tonnes of gold between 1862 and 1911. However, the gold proved elusive and the mine remained dormant until 1989, when it was re-opened. This time, it lasted for nine years.

The inaccessibility of Welsh gold has driven its price above and beyond deposits found in other countries. Welsh gold can cost up to five times the market price. Of course, this is also driven by the fact that there are now fewer operational mines left in Wales (although there are tentative plans to consider re-opening some in the future). Quite simply, Welsh gold is running out.

Someone who doesn't really need to worry about her stash of Welsh gold is Queen Elizabeth II. The royal family have been fans of Welsh gold for over 100 years and since the Queen Mother's marriage to George VI, the

majority of Royal Family members have had wedding bands made from the precious metal - including the one worn by Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge.

For her 60th birthday, the Queen was also presented with a one-kilogram ingot of gold from the Gwynfynydd mine - one of at least three such gifts presented to the royal family since 1923.

While the rest of us might not be expecting an ingot on our birthday, we can still partake in the royal tradition. The Clogau mine has closed, but the company is still producing fine gold jewellery - all of it with a touch of that elusive and exclusive Welsh gold.

And should you want to see the provenance of your jewellery pieces and visit the scenic valleys of the Dolgellau gold-belt in Wales, keep your eyes peeled for a stray nugget. You never know who might get to bite down on that sixpence...

## From Russia with love

The Russian Sparkle Ring and the Russian Sparkle Bangle are two of Buckley London's best-selling pieces and highly sought after for their striking interlocking design based on the traditional Russian wedding band.

The three linked rings are made from different kinds of metal, each signifying different attributes of love. These pieces are plated in hand polished 18k gold, rose gold and rhodium.



**BUCKLEY LONDON RUSSIAN SPARKLE RING,**  
£25, PAGE 90



**BUCKLEY LONDON RUSSIAN SPARKLE BANGLE**  
£49, PAGE 90