

Charters Towers North Queensland

SCHOOL EXCURSIONS

Guide to Attractions
and Pricing
2009

www.charterstowers.qld.gov.au



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See Pages 6 & 7 for details of two exciting NEW tours available in 2009

Texas Longhorn Wagon Tours & World Theatre Guided Tours



Welcome

Allow us to introduce you to Charters Towers - an excellent choice for your school excursion, where students can learn about the importance of gold mining in the North Queensland region ever since it began in the 1872.

Charters Towers is situated 90 minutes drive, or 135km south west of Townsville. This inland city is well known for its gold mining history and still mines gold today. The city has great facilities, commemorative parks and gardens, activities, meals and accommodation to make any school excursion an unforgettable learning experience. Farm stays are also a great outback learning adventure.

Let us introduce you to the thrill of the gold rush that once made Charters Towers the second largest city in Queensland. If your class is studying gold, or simply looking for somewhere to host a school camp, come and see us.

Susan Phillips
TOURISM MANAGER

This guide was designed to assist in the planning of school excursions to Charters Towers. It supplies a small portion of historic information to give you a glimpse into the gold rush of the 1870's. If you require more information please contact the

Charters Towers Visitor Information Centre



74 Mosman Street, Charters Towers 4820

Ph: (07) 4761 5533 Fax: (07) 4761 5536

Email: tourinfo@charterstowers.qld.gov.au

Web: www.charterstowers.qld.gov.au



Brief History

Charters Towers, the town they called 'The World' was born to the sound of thunder and flashes of lightning. Hugh Mosman, George Clarke, John Fraser and horse boy Jupiter had been prospecting when their horses scattered during a fierce thunderstorm. It was while searching for the horses next morning that the first Towers gold was discovered. The discovery point was near the modern day intersection of Mosman Street, Rainbow Road and Black Jack Road; at the very base of Towers Hill.

The party returned to Ravenswood early in 1872 to register their find which they named Charters Towers – Charters for Mr W.S.E.M. Charters, the Gold Commissioner based in Ravenswood, Towers because of the conical shaped hills in the vicinity of the discovery.

A rush of 'fortune seeking men' quickly followed and a small settlement named Millchester formed on the banks of Gladstone Creek (near the Venus Gold Battery). By the end of 1872 some 3000 men inhabited this new field. The alluvial men left early on for the Palmer River (Cape York) discoveries but the hard rock miners remained, seeking the gold in the deep veins underground. Charters Towers rather than Millchester soon became the main settlement.

The goldfield did not reach its peak gold production until 1899. During the period 1872-1899 the place changed from a rough settlement with bark and calico buildings, to a thriving city of some 25,000 inhabitants. The city formed proper streets, some wonderful houses emerged and many grand public buildings began to line the two main streets.

Literally hundreds of shafts were sunk during the lifetime of the field and the ore raised was processed through many large Treatment Batteries. It is estimated that 6,000,000 ounces of gold was won in the first 40 to 50 years of the life of the Towers.

The decline of mining following World War I saw the population shrink and the town become the supply centre or hub of the Dalrymple Shire, as well as an educational centre for students from all over North Queensland. The population today stands around the 10,000 mark and industries that service the community today are cattle, mining, health, education and tourism.





Activities available for school excursions

The *ghosts of gold* Heritage Trail

The *ghosts of gold* Heritage Trail brings to life the stories and legends of the characters that made Charters Towers a thriving and very wealthy city - from miners to bankers, from architects to engineers, the city's wealth is due to its rich and prosperous gold deposits.

Discover the *ghosts of gold* at the following attractions.

Visitor Information Centre – our Orientation Film is where students get their first taste of Charters Towers and learn about the city's history and how the city began from the discovery of gold.

Students can then follow through to the Stock Exchange Arcade, and listen to the Calling of the Card, an audio presentation re-enacting the days of how the gold stocks and shares were traded in this very arcade. The Assay Mining Museum at the back of the arcade has ore samples from local mines, old mining photographs and equipment that was used in striking it rich.

*Allow 30 minutes



Venus Gold Battery – On the outskirts of town, the Venus Gold Battery is an excellent example of how gold was processed. It is the largest surviving battery relic in Australia. A guided tour and film best explain the story of how the mill operated and how the battery's equipment was used to extract the gold from the ore. The Venus Gold Battery was one of 11 stamp batteries that operated in Charters Towers. This fully guided tour finishes with a twist - a short film telling of the colourful characters they might see whilst here.

*Allow 60 minutes



Towers Hill Lookout & Amphitheatre – From the top of Towers Hill students can get a birds-eye view of the city during the day. This viewing platform has factual storyboards that tell more of the Pyrites Works that was stationed on the hill from 1888 to 1899. WWII Bunkers are visible on the way to the viewing platform and Towers Hill is home to our very own Seismograph Station – one of 60 placed all over the world by the United States of America. Keep a look out for the delightful Allied Rock Wallabies.

*Allow 30 minutes

Overnighting? – Students staying overnight can watch the **ghosts after dark** film screened at the amphitheatre on top of **Towers Hill**. This sighting occurs nightly, however can be seen at an arranged time if you have a large group. Hear some of the local tales and take away an understanding of how tough 'The World' was back then.

*Allow 45 minutes



Charters Towers Folk Museum

This National Trust owned and operated museum houses a large collection of photographs, equipment and other memorabilia that reflects Charters Towers' golden past. The friendly volunteers and staff are only too willing to share their special stories and demonstrate some of the equipment for the students. Ask for a demonstration of the flying fox - the Lampson Aerial Cash System from the old Pollards building. This is always a favourite.



*Allow 60 minutes

The Miner's Cottage is a mini museum that offers an experience set back in time. The cottage is refurbished and decorated to show how the house would have looked at the start of the 20th century. Students can try their hand at panning for gold.

*Allow 60 minutes

Guided City Tour

A personalised city tour with a local guide will uncover many significant sites and facts about Charters Towers' history. Discover the hidden treasures of Charters Towers, visit places off the beaten track and hear the stories from the old days. Your guide will board your bus and tour for approximately 60 minutes.

*Allow 60 – 80 minutes

Historic Ambulance Centre

This centre dates back to 1903 and was restored and reopened to the public 100 years from its first opening. The centre was the first ambulance station outside Brisbane and houses a wonderful collection of vehicles, uniforms and an enormous number of log books recording the cases treated by ambulance officers during the past 100 years. *Allow 30 minutes



Texas Longhorns Wagon Tours

Horseshoe B Longhorns, just 10 km from Charters Towers has the largest herd of purebred Texas Longhorns in Australia. Learn some of the history of these iconic "wild west" cattle while listening to the clip of the hooves, the clink of the harness and the rhythm of the canvas covered wagon. Enjoy your Billy Tea and Smoko while the "gentle giant" draft horses are being harnessed and hitched to the wagon.....something very few people get to experience in this modern age.

*Allow 2 hrs



Drive-In Cinema

Take time out for the students and watch a couple of flicks at our local Drive-In Cinema – one of only six (6) still operating in Queensland. There are only 12 left in Australia. The Drive-In usually operates Friday, Saturday & Sunday. However, for groups of 40 or more the Drive-In will arrange special screenings on other nights. If enough notice is given the Drive-In will even attempt to fill special requests for a particular movie.

World Theatre

Explore this cultural complex where the unique blend of heritage architecture and state of the art technology meet. Originally the Australian Bank of Commerce, it has been converted into a 660 seat performing arts theatre and two cinemas. Check with their friendly staff for details of the live shows, movie times, morning melodies and local and touring exhibitions of art, sculpture, photography and more.



World Theatre Guided Tours

Hear about the history and intrigue that surrounds this unique building. Learn about the “Mosman Street Tragedy” and its ghostly legacy.



More Activities

Lissner and Centenary Parks

While you are out and about driving why not have a picnic in one of our beautiful parks. There is the 7 hectare Lissner Park with the Boer War kiosk, band rotunda, children’s playground, WWI guns, Rotary Centenary Fountain, Federation Fountain, the duck pond and memorials to grazier and pioneer William Hann and Jupiter Mosman. Lissner Park is perfect for evening picnics as it is well lit. Perhaps you’d prefer to explore Centenary Park with the gold discovery monument. Both parks have picnic tables, gas BBQ’s, toilets and are always cool and shady.



Pioneer Cemetery

The Pioneer Cemetery contains graves of those buried from 1872 – 1895 and gives insight into the hardships our pioneers faced on the goldfields.



Charters Towers Cemetery

This newer cemetery, established in 1895, is the resting place for a number of interesting local characters including Jupiter Mosman who was one of the party that discovered gold at Charters Towers, Doctor Leonard Redmond who discovered Australian dengue fever, Fredrick Pfeiffer owner of the rich Day Dawn PC Mine and James Kenniff who was the last bushranger in Queensland.

Burdekin Weir

Take your students out to the Burdekin Weir. This is the source of our liquid gold – water. The city's water supply is pumped from here to the reservoir on Towers Hill. There is a large picnic area with BBQ facilities (wood fired). If you would prefer a spot of fishing turn off to the left before the picnic area and travel approximately one kilometre to the Burdekin Water Park.

Historic Bluff Downs Cattle Station Stay

If you would like to experience outback life on a working cattle station, Bluff Downs is an ideal trip not to be missed. Bluff Downs is about an hour's drive north of Charters Towers on the Lynd Highway and is surrounded by the spectacular deep-water lagoons of the Basalt River. An all round experience can be had on this 400sq km working station, where students can swim near the homestead or catch a glimpse of graceful brolgas, shy chital deer and dingoes as they drink from the water holes. Accommodation costs are inclusive of meals, smoko, snacks and activities on the historic Homestead. School groups are well catered for. *Bookings are essential.*



Cattle Sales

Experience the thrill of rural living when livestock goes under the hammer. Cattle Sales are held every Wednesday at the Dalrymple Sales Yards.



Adventure Based Learning

High Ropes: By facing various mental and physical challenges at height, you will work as a team, develop leadership, self-esteem, co-operation and extend personal boundaries.

Activities Include:

- Flying Fox
- Swinging Log Ladder
- Jungle Vine
- Granny Walk
- Heebie Jeebie
- Swinging Possum
- Long Run



Low Ropes: A challenge for younger participants with similar activities to high ropes at a more comfortable level.

Team Activities: Many other group challenges are available and continually being introduced.

Teamwork. Team building. These words are the starting point for many clients. Teams have become a growing part of many organisations as companies and leaders search for ways to enhance productivity, boost creativity, achieve challenging goals and develop a winning culture.

We cater for groups from: Schools, businesses, community, clubs, organisations and any groups looking for adventure.

All instructors are highly trained and accredited.

For further details and bookings please contact **Millchester State School**

Phone: (07) 4754 6666 **Fax:** (07) 4754 6600 **Email:** zkemp5@eq.edu.au



Ravenswood

Step back in time and explore the unique aspects of the heritage listed gold mining town of Ravenswood just an hour's drive south east from Charters Towers.

Gold was discovered in 1868 and the town of Ravenswood was born, with many public buildings being erected. Today only a few remain as magnificent examples of the prosperity of this town's wealthy beginnings.

A new lease of life for the town came about in 1995 when the population of 100 locals was boosted by the arrival of some 300 miners to once again reap the rewards gold mining has to offer.

Things to See and Do

Court House Museum (open 11.00am – 1.00pm)

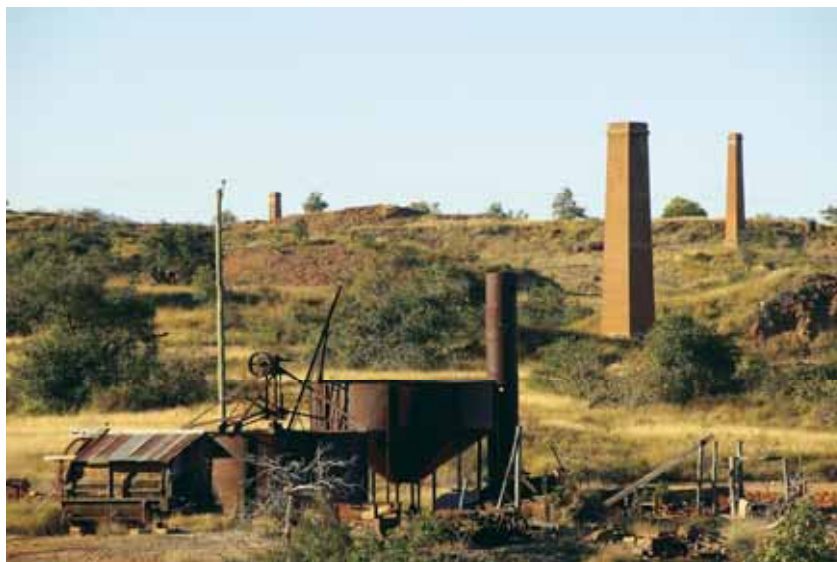
Self Guided Walks exploring the old chimney stacks, mullock heaps, School of Arts Hall, the old church on the hill, the cemetery and more.

Butler's Cottage is available for school groups for gold panning. Inquire at the Museum prior to your visit.

Open cut gold mine lookout. Watch the trucks and machinery at work in the mine.

White Blow Environmental Park featuring a large white quartz rock outcrop dating back some 300 million years.

Lake Dalrymple (Burdekin Falls Dam) – 80 km south of Ravenswood.



GROUP TERMS & CONDITIONS

TOUR CODE/NAME:		OUR REF:
TOUR DATE:		
PASSENGER NOS:		
CONTACT NAME:		
PHONE/FAX/MOBILE:		
EMAIL:		
DATE:		

- Unless otherwise agreed to in writing, confirmed passenger numbers are required 7 days prior to the date of the tour.
- Where passenger numbers are reduced within 48 hours of the date of the tour, payment will be required for the total number of passengers as stated in the Tour Group – Final Booking Confirmation (Form 4) or the most recent confirmation held on file should Form 4 have not been returned to Charters Towers Visitor Information Centre by the tour company.
- A 50% cancellation fee applies when cancelling the entire group within 48 hours of the date of the tour.
- Full payment is required within 7 days of date of invoice.
- Where there are no confirmed credit facilities, a security deposit equivalent to 50% of the total group booking is required to guarantee the reservation, with the final 50% payable on the day of the tour.

ACCEPTED METHODS OF PAYMENT: (Please indicate your preference)

- EFTPOS, Cash or Cheque prior to arrival
- EFTPOS, Cash or Cheque on the day of tour
- 7 day invoice – we **DO / DO NOT*** have credit arrangements with the Charters Towers Regional Council. (*please indicate)

Cheques should be made payable to Charters Towers Regional Council



Some interesting facts

- In 1887 gold was the equivalent AU\$6.60 per oz. Today it is around AU\$1000 per oz (28.349523 grams).
- Prior to the rail, Cobb & Co. coaches transported the mail from Townsville to Charters Towers, this taking approximately 2 - 2 ½ days.
- There were 11 gold crushing mills in operation when the city was at its mining peak.
- The deepest mine shaft on the field was the Brilliant Extended, 926.6m (3040ft)
- For many years, the only city in Queensland that could supply skilled miners was Charters Towers through the Charters Towers School of Mines.
- The University of Queensland's Seismograph Station occupies the area in which gold was first discovered

Group of mine managers and owners with two gold bars on their shoulders - evidence of the abundance of precious ore found in Charters Towers.



CHARTERS TOWERS VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

a function of

Charters Towers Regional Council

ABN 67 731 313 583



SCHOOL EXCURSION EVALUATION

If on your school excursion you've come across something that really made an impression or something you think can be improved for the benefit of others please let us know.

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

DATE: _____ TOWN of ORIGIN: _____

Why did you choose Charters Towers? _____

Would you recommend a School Excursion of Charters Towers to others? Yes or No (please circle)

Comments _____

Was planning and co-ordination sufficient to your needs? Yes or No (please circle)

Comments _____

Please list your highlights of your trip _____

Please tick (✓) attractions you visited and let us know how you found your experience there.

- Orientation Tour _____
- Venus Gold Battery _____
- Towers Hill _____
- Miner's Cottage _____
- Charters Towers Folk Museum _____
- Ambulance Centre _____
- Guided City Tour _____
- Lissner Park _____
- Centenary Park _____

Your comments and suggestions are important and will assist us with the future planning of School Excursions.

Please fax or post this completed form to the address above.

Thank you for your time and valuable comments.



Please direct all correspondence to:

The Tourism Manager
Visitor Information Centre
PO Box 189
CHARTERS TOWERS QLD 4820

Tel: 07 4761 5533

Fax: 07 4761 5536

Email: tourinfo@charterstowers.qld.gov.au

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Charters Towers
the ghosts of gold