

TELLING THE STORY OF WAIHI'S GOLD

Last week the Waihi Arts Centre and Museum reopened its doors after its big makeover, courtesy of the television programme *Heritage Rescue* hosted by local archaeologist Brigid Gallagher. The refurbishment has focussed and refined the displays which now provide interpretive material and a clear explanation of pre 1952 gold mining.

This *Update* looks at how three establishments in Waihi each provide a different slant on the story of Waihi's gold.

Gold DISCOVERY Centre

Housed within the Gold Discovery Centre, the Waihi Gold Experience provides a range of interactive activities.

There's nowhere else you will be able to put your weight on an airleg drill and feel the vibration just like a real drill, and you really shouldn't be playing two-up anywhere else except here. (Try it. You will win at the beginning, but how far are you willing to push your luck?)

A range of dynamic models tell the story of gold mining that now spans three centuries, complementing the story told by the museum. The emphasis is on fun learning and interaction. There are buttons to push, levers to pull and wheels to turn. In the second part of the Gold Discovery Centre you are immersed in the industry of today. You can listen to mine staff tell about their jobs and watch videos of modern mining machinery at work before you have a go at making your own piece of virtual gold jewellery. The other big attraction at the Gold Discovery Centre is the mine tours which allow you to 'get inside the fence' with knowledgeable guides and view modern gold mining up close.

The i-SITE is also located at the Gold Discovery Centre. Here you will find plenty of suggestions for tours, visits and activities in Waihi, the Coromandel, and beyond.

www.golddiscoverycentre.co.nz



Waihi ARTS CENTRE and MUSEUM

As well as being open to the general public, the Waihi Arts Centre and Museum offers tours for schools and special interest groups.

The programme is run by a retired teacher. Three different programmes cater for students in years 1-4, 4 to 8, and 9 to 13. Programmes focus on the experiences and events that were common for miners and mining between 1878, when gold was first discovered in the region, and 1952, when the Martha mine was closed.

The programmes are aligned to The New Zealand Curriculum through the social sciences, science and technology learning areas. There are also online resources which can be utilised by teachers and students when they are back at school. All programmes are delivered by volunteers who will navigate the students through experiences and activities in the museum.

The recently refurbished mining section of the museum display now provides a guided tour through Waihi's mining history. Entry is via a real vintage mine cage. It may not really take you underground, but once you walk through to the other side you will feel as if you are deep in the original Martha mine a hundred years ago. Models, displays and artefacts from the era all combine to provide a fascinating journey through Waihi's gold mining history.

The museum also operates as a place for the collection, display and preservation of items of historical interest to the Waihi District.

www.waihimuseum.org.nz



OceanaGold EDUCATION Centre

The Education Centre run by OceanaGold caters for around 6,000 students each year.

Schools book to visit, with many having returned year after year and having permanent bookings. There is no charge. Visitors range from pre-school groups to post graduate students, as well as vocational training students and overseas groups. The Centre is run by a practising teacher. Activities offered depend on the age of the visiting students. Primary and Intermediate students are offered experiential 'hands on' activities. Senior High School students are offered a range of curriculum-linked activities that relate directly to an aspect of a particular subject area. This is key to the Centre's on-going success and its popularity with teachers.

One vital aspect of the Centre's success is that appropriate up to date technology is used to deliver lessons and activities. The Centre is equipped with a

Smartboard, video cameras with green screen, iPods for reading QR codes, computer work stations, and a simulated underground area which includes a full size video projection system and surround sound audio. Skype facilities are also available for schools unable to visit.

www.waihigold.co.nz/sustainability/education

