



Visitors enjoying the Great Northern Mine Walk at the Herberton Mining Museum.

Credit: John Philippa, Herberton Mining Museum Volunteer.



Hard rock mining display.

Credit: John Philippa, Herberton Mining Museum Volunteer.



Visitors learn about 'tin panning' in the museum courtyard.

Credit: John Philippa, Herberton Mining Museum Volunteer.

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Hours: Open daily 9.00am to 4.00pm, except Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day

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Presented by Museum & Gallery Services Queensland in partnership with the Herberton Mining Museum.

'Did You Know' – intriguing facts about the museum

- Herberton is the oldest town on the Tablelands. Tin mining started here on the site of the Herberton Mining Museum in 1880. The railway line from Brisbane, through Cairns, Kuranda, Mareeba and Atherton, reached Herberton in 1910. During the first 30 years of mining in Herberton all the crushed tin-oxide (Cassiterite) had to be transported in 50kg bags by animal power (pack-horses and mules) down the range to the coast to be shipped to Brisbane for smelting. Steam trains changed that.
- A local miner, Mr. James Mazlin, modified the common miner's pick and invented the 'Mazlin Pick'. Traditional miner's picks had one head with two sharp ends as chisels. Mazlin designed his pick with removable chisels, which when blunt, could be replaced with a sharp chisel in the mine. In 1907 he patented this pick as Patent No. 9857. It meant a significant increase in efficiency for the local miners who still had to work with relatively primitive technology. Relatives of James have donated one of his Mazlin Picks to the Herberton Mining Museum. It is on display there with their letter.

Our Profile

Herberton Mining Museum is located on the historic Great Northern Mine site where Australia's first tin-rush took place in 1880. Within a year over 150 mines were being worked and Herberton became the first town on the Tablelands. The site is recognized for the rarity and intactness of the surviving steam haulage machinery, which surpasses any other mining place in Queensland.

The Great Northern Mine has a significant place in Queensland's mining history for its central role in the development of the mining industry on the Atherton Tableland and the development of Cairns as a major port in far north Queensland.

The museum explains how tin mining developed in Herberton via an interpretive mine walk through the adjacent bush and a diverse collection of mining objects in its displays. The museum's collections illustrate Herberton's mining history from the 1880s when tin ore was discovered and the 'tin rush' started, until commercial operations ceased in the 1960s. Both alluvial and hard rock tin mining are displayed and interpreted for visitors. The Minerals room houses several collections of minerals, rocks, precious metals and gemstones. Hands-on activities are located in the outdoor courtyard, where visitors and school groups can try their hand at rock drilling (by hammer and chisel) and tin panning.

Although its primary focus is tin mining, the museum also includes displays on supporting industries, such as timber and transport, as well as Herberton social history - which reflects the continued support and interest in heritage values in the local community and their desire to see their heritage preserved for the benefit of future generations. A local archives area is available for more in-depth research.

Outside the Museum building, in addition to the impressive GNM archaeological remains, visitors can also enjoy the Gordon Gardens which feature a Tom Risley sculpture, a miner's cottage garden, a botanical walk, explorers' memorial plaques and the Women's Seat- a traditional lookout point across the picturesque, historic and hilly town of Herberton.

What the Standards Program has meant for our museum

We now realise that the heritage listed site with its mining equipment and cultural landscape is the most valuable asset. The museum collection complements and interprets the site.

Our museum is not just a collection of facts and objects, but it is about interpreting them by telling stories of history and people in various ways.