

# How this state rocks

CREATED FROM CHAOS,  
A Geological Trail Of 100 Sites In  
Tasmania

By Peter Manchester (\$60)

**T**ASMANIA abounds with geological diversity.

Consider the tessellated pavement and the Tasman blowhole and arch at Eaglehawk Neck, the organ pipes at Mount Wellington, the multitude of mineral deposits throughout the island, more karst areas (limestone and dolomite) than any other state, spectacular beaches and dunes.

The history of it all is explained by Launceston man Peter Manchester, who has had 40 years' experience as a geology lecturer.

The Cataract Gorge was shaped by violent earthquake activity long ago, he says.

"About 30 million years ago the Tamar Valley was dammed by volcanic lava flows near the Batman Bridge. A large, narrow freshwater lake formed, stretching from Whirlpool Reach to Cressy, up to 5 kilometres wide in places.

"In this lake were deposited muds, sands and gravels, hundreds of metres thick, which underlies Launceston CBD to Dilston and beyond".

The various rises and falls of sea level in the past 19,000 years produced an extremely complex series of river sediments around Launceston, we read.

"The present sea level was reached only a little over 10,000 years ago, resulting in the deposit of vast quantities of mainly mud, such as what underlies Inveresk and Invermay".

In ice ages of long ago, glaciers gouged out Dove Lake and Cradle Valley and thousands of small lakes on the Central Plateau.

Did you know that the Beaconsfield gold mine now produces about 75,000 ounces of gold a year? Between 1877 and its closure in 1914 it produced 26.6 tonnes.

And did you know that Australia's deepest cave is the Niggly Cave in the Florentine Valley, at 375 metres?

This geological tour takes you to 100 sites around Tasmania, from the Killiekrankie diamonds (topaz) of Flinders Island to pleistocene-era fossils of the Mowbray swamp.

Author Manchester says his book is designed for ordinary readers as well as students and that all the sites can be visited by car and short walks.

There are plenty of technical terms and after you have studied it you will be well up on your biostratigraphy, cainozoic glaciations and buchites.

— NOEL SHAW



Ralph Falls, in the Mount Victoria Forest Reserve, 20 kilometres from Ringarooma, is unique. It falls 100 metres and there is no pool at the bottom.



The mineral crocoite (lead chromate) is the mineral emblem of Tasmania. It occurs abundantly in the Dundas region of the West Coast.