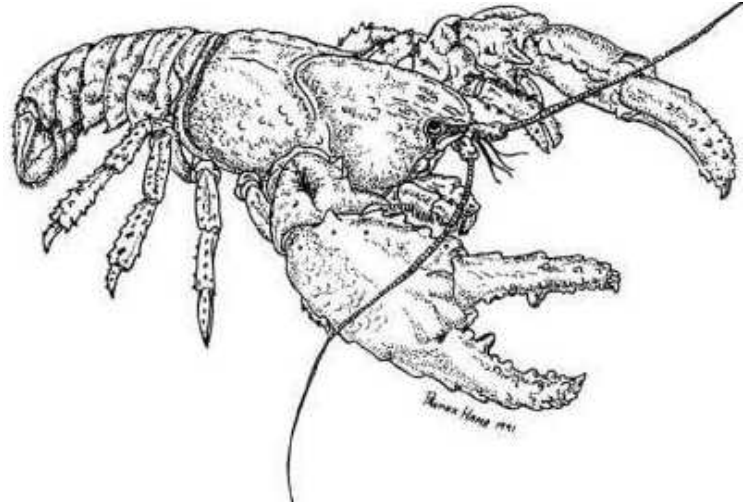


# Disjunct Naturalists

WEBSITE OF THE CENTRAL NORTH FIELD NATURALISTS



## *Created from Chaos*

book review by **Ron Nagorcka**

***Created from Chaos – a geological trail of 100 sites in Tasmania*** by Peter S. Manchester, Self-published 2010.

Were you to wander into a local bookshop, pick up this book and read the back cover to see what it's about, you would immediately encounter the following sentence:

Tasmania, its landscape, rocks and tectonic structures is the most misunderstood and less celebrated aspect of the state. [sic]

If you are somewhat of a grammatical pedant (a category in which I fear I must be included) you would probably replace it instantly upon the shelf. However if you also have a strong interest in Tasmanian geology and have been keeping an eye out for something to help you unravel its complexities (another category which includes me) you would probably be willing to open it up to see what it's like inside. After all, the front cover has a wonderfully dramatic picture.

First you might read the Forward [sic] by Professor Ross Large, which encourages you to keep the book in your glove box. Then you might note that the list of contents is also a list of the 100 localities of the geological trail, which includes a pleasingly strong representation of places in the north of the state – places whose geology has often interested and confounded me.

Continuing through the Introduction and a section on **What makes Tasmania's geology and landscape different ... like no other?** you will gain the strong sense that the author is both passionate and knowledgeable about his subject. The passion comes through with sentences in italics and/or bold type with up to 3 exclamation marks and some very strangely placed commas. The knowledge comes through with quite a few geological terms which are not explained. As the author himself suggests, you will need a basic geological dictionary to help you interpret this book. A glossary, it seems to me, would have been a much better idea.

OK – so on to the 'chaos sites' themselves. Leafing through to page 25: "... Mt Barrow"

Mount Barrow is a **Jurassic dolerite** capped plateau with widespread **block fields** with a sharp summit ridge at the north-east end. Local relief on Mount Barrow is about 60 m and takes the form of lower rounded hills of almost bare dolerite. As with the formation

of Ben Lomond, the eastern margin of the Launceston-Basin and involves a series of Northwest – Southeast aligned faults which caused the basin to be downthrown by 300 m (not Mount Barrow uplifted). [Sic]

I was doing OK with this explanation until that last sentence. And it's not just the pedant in me that has trouble with disentangling the grammatical mess in order to uncover the meaning. Unfortunately this is not an isolated occurrence – such sentences occur all through the book which has obviously been neither proof-read nor edited.

Take another example about Eddystone Point on page 63:

This coastal extremity is part of the Eddystone Point coarse-grained biotite adamellite of the Musselroe Suite (S-type) of the Eddystone Batholith.

**All confusing (!!!) in context to its identity! ... most observable people understand it as a granite which is bright red.**

It's not just the grammar. It's the constant and thoroughly incomprehensible use of dots, commas, bold type, italics, wildly varying font sizes and constant changes in margin indentation that make this the perfect example of how not to self-publish a book.

This is a great pity as the idea behind the book is a good one, the diagrams are well-drawn and helpful (if sometimes a little small), and the information is generally there if one is willing to negotiate the extremely rugged grammatical and syntactical terrain. Since Darwin's visit Tasmania has fascinated geologists with its uniqueness and complexity, and while there's not much else around to guide the interested amateur in an understanding of this extremely important subject, maybe this book will just have to do!

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