

MUDSTONE

Rory Wray-McCann

MUDSTONE

tip rat

bower bird, collector of unreclaimed
assorted dross, malingerer

pelican pick

Tasmanian designed hand held earth mover

lutruwita

island of paradise,
indigenous landmass known as Tasmania

A clastic fictionella of feign and serendipity.

At the outset of these mudstone deliberations, I feel compelled to commence by saying, on behalf of all those **tip rats** fortunate to wield an occasional **pelican pick** over outcropping **lutruwita**/Tasmania, that mudstone rapping is a hard game to stick at and, to be really oblique and obsidian about it, fearfully hard.

So it is with that 365 day a year mudstone principle in mind, that I commence this roll in the mud account, that sets out to loosely predicate and prevaricate, on the little known shiny pleasures that are sometime observed, in the most boring of all the **clastic**-ites and shytes ... the much maligned and ill-forgot mudstones.

clastic

unsorted muddy shyte,
found all over, dried out lahar

dreamtime rock groups

found tertiary to archean, abundant

hypokinetically

prospecting by instinct, the big Kahuna within

King Billy/William Lanne

1834-1868 indigenous lutruwita man

Whatever be the case of your own hunter-gatherering, it was beginner's luck for me, that I was one of the two Lost Rocks mudlarkers appointed to formally digress and filibuster on such a perennially benign and belittled rock group. Truth be told the anointment only came about through the global vagaries of a common human phenomenon that apparently affects all local rock ratters. A cultural **dreamtime** effect that is somehow isotopically instilled in you and **hypokinetically** theorised as the free-ranging, A-type, mother earth prospector within.

Whether we care to believe it or not, it seems that we all have it in us ... a genetically inbuilt, post-dreamtime conviction, running through our veins. It is the double **King Billy** helix, inner sense, or instinctive conviction; to go hunting for rocks. It is indigenous in nature, this lutruwita-nirvana-prospectors-complex.

rock ratter
crystal terrorist

quandary
enigma, anomaly, hard to reconcile,
innately fictoidal

rakali
lutruwita water rat, Tasmanian otter, skittish, red
beard, up to 60 centimetres, sometimes albino,
wet ground dweller

Allow me then if you would please, a semblance of your time, so that I may digress awhile and tackle a **ratters quandary** that has perplexed me for many a long year and that caused me to inquire, ever deeper into the ancient lutruwita past, with a deeply forensic mindset whereby I came to learn that it does not matter a whit what you may be looking to find, Ordovician cephalopods, stromatolytes, old bottles, bricks, nuggets, fungi, orchids, crystals, quartz stringers, platypi or **rakalis** ... it is the instinctual personal curiosity that counts most, every single hole you dug, because only then does the passion kick in, that produces the vital persistence needed to discover the dazzling rainforest treasures, unfortunately well hidden by mother nature.

MUDSTONE

Dundas bronzite

black jade serpentine,
multiple mirror inclusions, pleocroic

stichtite

lustrous green serpentine, multiple purple
chromite blebs, green marble

wrigglite

highly mineralised limestone stratigraphic horizon,
neo-Proterozoic, calcareous, fluoritic, cassiteritic,
fossiliferous, wolframatic, chalcopyritic, telluritic,
mineralogic godsend, rarest skarn on mother earth

andesite

igneous lava, Cambrian, forms hills, ridges,
spurs and mountain tops

pegmatite

narrow vein crystalline mineralised structure,
usually quartzitic or cassiteritic, interfingering
with granite outcrops of large volumetric area,
Devonian, often filthy rich, crystals of great size

red gossan

crocoite bearing bog iron outcrop, usually in
temperate rainforests, highly valuable, hard to burn

As experienced rock hoarders and ratters eventually come to understand, as a rule of opposable thumb, most lutruwita/ Tasmanian rocks are boring by nature, and the bland clayey mudstones which make up over 65 per cent of the outcropping landmass, are more boring than virtually all of the major dreamtime rock groups, such as the familiar [Dundas bronzites](#), [stichtite](#), [wrigglites](#), [andesites](#), copper clays, [pegmatites](#) or blood red gossans.

buttongrass plains
indigenous inland arterial highways,
spiky with little brown bobs, once profuse,
widespread pre-apocalypto

lurnrs
mentors, know it all, le Grande wazoo,
doctör of rocks

Even so, in all my spongy sphagnum moss travails,
trudging through the **buttongrass** tundra,
I never once ran into folk who did not like nor covet,
a shiny thing covered in mud,
when first shown it ... not one.

The shinier the better. All the more to covet
and trade.
That's how it goes with the rock ratters of this place.
And I am with them. A blow in from the north,
or not.

Usually I just find the shiny things by sheer
association with the much maligned mudstones.
That is where they are inevitably found. Fair in the
mud. That is where you find what you are looking to
rat. Always. Awaiting liberation.

And though most often boring, to rat nine times
out of ten, it is the last ten percent that puts the
mudstones in a crystal-bearing class all their own.

Having led an opportune, if not laborious and
malcontent career in the pursuit of shiny things, I
have ratted a multitude of subterranean vortexts.
Only through the regular relocation of large volumes
of muddy sediments, both hard and soft, did I
slowly get my ratter eyes '**lurnd**' up.

MUDSTONE

reticulated cerrusite

exquisitely crystalline, white lead, translucent,
Broken Hill, Mt. Isa, Dundas

chalcopyrite

copper rock, usually with 10% pyrite,
from the Greek word, chalco (copper)

golden barite

yellowy brownish, translucent,
super rare, highly sought

black gold chalcocite

metallic black crystals of oxide of copper,
often magnificent, mostly brilliant, super rare

azurite

blue sulphate of copper water, attractive

malachite

green sulphate of copper water, attractive

rose petal covellite

uniquely, rose petal copper sulphide, supergene,
highly attractive, found once only

ruby cassiterite

tin crystals, hexagonal, up to 5mm, sparkle with
brilliant red crimson flashes

Eventually they became well focused to a high nocturnal ocularity – a point where I lurnd myself to spot a potential shiny thing a hundred metres along a muddy cave, just by reflective chance and sparkle alone.

Just don't take your eyes off it for a nanosecond.

Along the way I lurnd to prick an ear to every little gem of information that might be gleaned from careless folk or the sudden geological change in a round, just dropped.

That's when you get onto them.

It is not so much the deep-felt ratter within you, it's knowing that a sparkle a day is all it takes to make the mudstones pay. That is where you find the crystallised shiny things – underground in the primordial dark, clinging to clammy, steaming mud on a stony matrix harder than rock. Shiny little mothers like reticulated cerrusites, crystallised chalcopyrites, golden barites, black gold chalcocites, azurite, malachite, rose petal covellites or ruby red cassiterite, there for the picking amongst other extreme mudstone exotica.

So it was, when I first began to consider my own
lost rock rapping and snavelling experiences, having
done my Job Safety Analysis on those dark times,
that I concluded that it was probably safe enough
that I more or less transcribe some previously
undisclosed hunter gatherer vignettes, of slippery
times dodging bad gravity and shaking shiny
things from the bowels of terra magnus. [lutruwita/
Tasmania, the isle of paradise.](#)

Pegarah

King's Island, far west Basses Strait,
land of the Pegarah

district of Timgarick

west lutruwita, Macquarie Harbour to Corinna,
Scott's map, 1877

burra

relatively safe hole in the ground

Jo Wicky

talkative lutruwita bird, never shuts up, eats grubs,
pygmy possums, cat food

Pygmy possum

little fella, marsupial, thumb size, meat eater,
vicious beyond the pale when hungry, tasty on stick

That's the reason why, as far as fictioneering goes, I'm now strategising knocking up this rare earth mudmap, from up front, at the arse end of a Pegarah scaling bar. One tell-tale clastic slab at a time. You may be sure, so pardon me for the miner Freudian slips as I make them. That's what happens when you want to get your round away and go ratting for rocks. In fairness to the reader, I am really not one for fiction, in any socially transmitted way. It was not until now that I finally got to know that not only did I like rolling in and gouging mud, but that mud gouging was endemic a local annual pastime, in our time immemorial Timgarick district.

Fiction reading was never my particular hominid interest all the same, although I did get to read enough rock walls in my burra days to be able to hold a conventionally ambivalent and inconsequential conversation, around a prospectors campfire midden ... I was, I hear, lurnd to talk the ears off a Jo Wicky.

Nor do I mind confiding that as a hole-boring ratter, that it definitely took a fair while for me to come to grips with my mudstoned burra past, but when I looked back in quicksand, stuttered, and literar-ily transgressed awhile, I remember, quite