

You Must Have Rocks in Your Head

All through this trip we have seen mountains made out of molehills and molehills made out of mountains. All this, in the quest for minerals. The continual movement of enormous volumes of earth is mind boggling and it's been going on since the first prospector stuck his pick in the ground and it will end when there's nothing left. At Mt. Isa that will be some hundred plus years. As the mine tour guide told us yesterday, it has no chance of running out in the foreseeable future.

Today we went to Lark Quarry, site of the only recorded dinosaur stampede in the world. The stampede left foot prints in the mud that were subsequently covered with a layer of limestone. The stampede took place ninety five million years ago give or take.

Now I'm not too sure what the foreseeable future is but based on the ninety-five million year old dinosaur stampede, it's got to be more than a hundred years. I mean we know basically what happened to wipe out the dinosaurs for example (meteor hits what is now the Gulf of Mexico and tilts the earth by forty five degrees) but the foreseeable future is only a hundred years? Personally I think the foreseeable future is both too close and too ugly for anyone to want to consider it, so they just round it up to a few generations. This gives the impression of a caring answer without the obviously odious conclusions.

So here's some things to consider

1. Mt. Isa township is due to be moved in the next two years because there is a huge body of ore under it. It's got to go... it's in the way.
2. The smelter will close as it's not worth processing the ore in Australia. Smelting will be done offshore as it's more efficient (read cheaper).
3. No machinery that goes down the mines ever sees the light of day again (not even a Toyota ute is brought back up). It's not worth the effort... they bury everything.
4. The larger machinery is operated by remote control on computer terminals in the Brisbane CBD. Automation is safer (read cheaper).
5. A by-product of the copper ore smelting at Mt. Isa is gold. A very small percentage but sufficient to pay ALL the wages of the employees.
6. Photography is prohibited in any mine. Why?
7. Copper has reached an all time high value of nine thousand dollars per tonne, this is despite the realization that what has come out of Mt. Isa in the last hundred years is only "the very tip of the ore body".
8. Currently the mine is two point seven kilometers deep. How deep will the base finally be?

I don't really know why I even mention these things except that I wonder what the archeologists will think of it all in ninety-five millions years from now..... give or take. For the time being though I guess it's all about the money.

The Mt Isa Picture Book



Rock face ready to be blown to bits.



Large rock hauling machine (mucker)



Vintage track loader

Although no photography is allowed in mines I had a note from my mum.



24 hours a day 365 days a year. Production began in 1923 and will stop ...
Some mighty ugly country around Mt. Isa a... yup ... mighty ugly.

The Lark Quarry Picture Book



One day a bunch of dinosaurs came to the creek for a drink. Some were the size of chickens and some were the size of emus. In the background a meat eating dinosaur, the size of a truck (not a huge truck, but a truck nonetheless), watches.



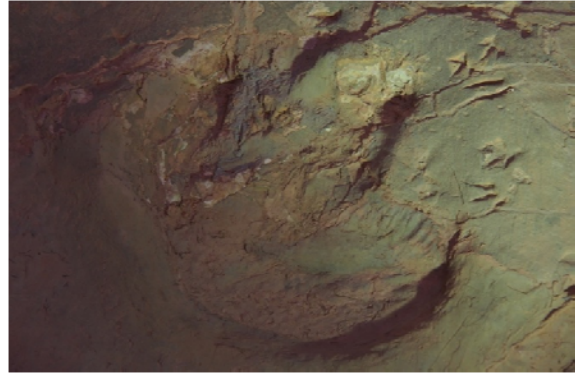
Seeing his chance for a quick snack before the meteor hits (remember the meteor... see you can learn from history), he chases the little rascals all over the muddy bank.



Did he get one? Who knows? At least three must have survived judging by this early photograph. Now I think about it, it must be at least four, I forgot the guy holding the camera.



Chicken dinosaur prints



Truck sized dinosaur prints



The world heritage listed dinosaur trackways.



Mighty pretty country round the dinosaur trail ... yup ... mighty pretty.

You now get to vote on which picture book you prefer both now and in the foreseeable future, future, future, future.....