

A Review of the Mastodon Project  
By Jack Wooldridge

This Wednesday we headed off to Centenary College to watch a play based on the story of the mastodons found in Warren County in 1844. I went not knowing what to expect, but it was good. In fact, it was excellent. It turned out that as part of Centenary College's Women's Playwright Festival, they asked a playwright named Merri Biechler to write a play based on the mammoth's story. It wasn't a long play, but it was good; and it was written in just three days! Anyway, the play itself concerned a relationship between a budding Paleontologist and a man with a rather cruel streak who is madly in love with her. Well, you can see that nothing good is going to come out of that! It does all, funnily enough, end up alright, although the two main characters never see each other again.

The play was very good, but the really interesting bit was where the author got up and told us the process she went through to write it. She started by doing the research, and then by creating characters and images from that inspiration. The really interesting, and the most gruesome, bit that she found was about the man who bought the mastodon from the farmer who owned the land, a professor named Mr Webster. He borrowed money from many sources to create an exhibit using the mastodon, and one of them got a bit angry that Mr Webster wasn't giving back the money quick enough, and began to stalk him. Finally, Mr Webster killed him and scattered his body bits all over his estate. There you go. Gruesome bit over.

Lastly, a geologist came to talk about the geology of the area that the mastodons were found in. His talk was very interesting, and he was a good speaker. Hearing him speak made me want to grab my own hammer and go out looking for rocks!

I really enjoyed the Mastodon Project, and I attended the playwriting class by the same playwright this Saturday!