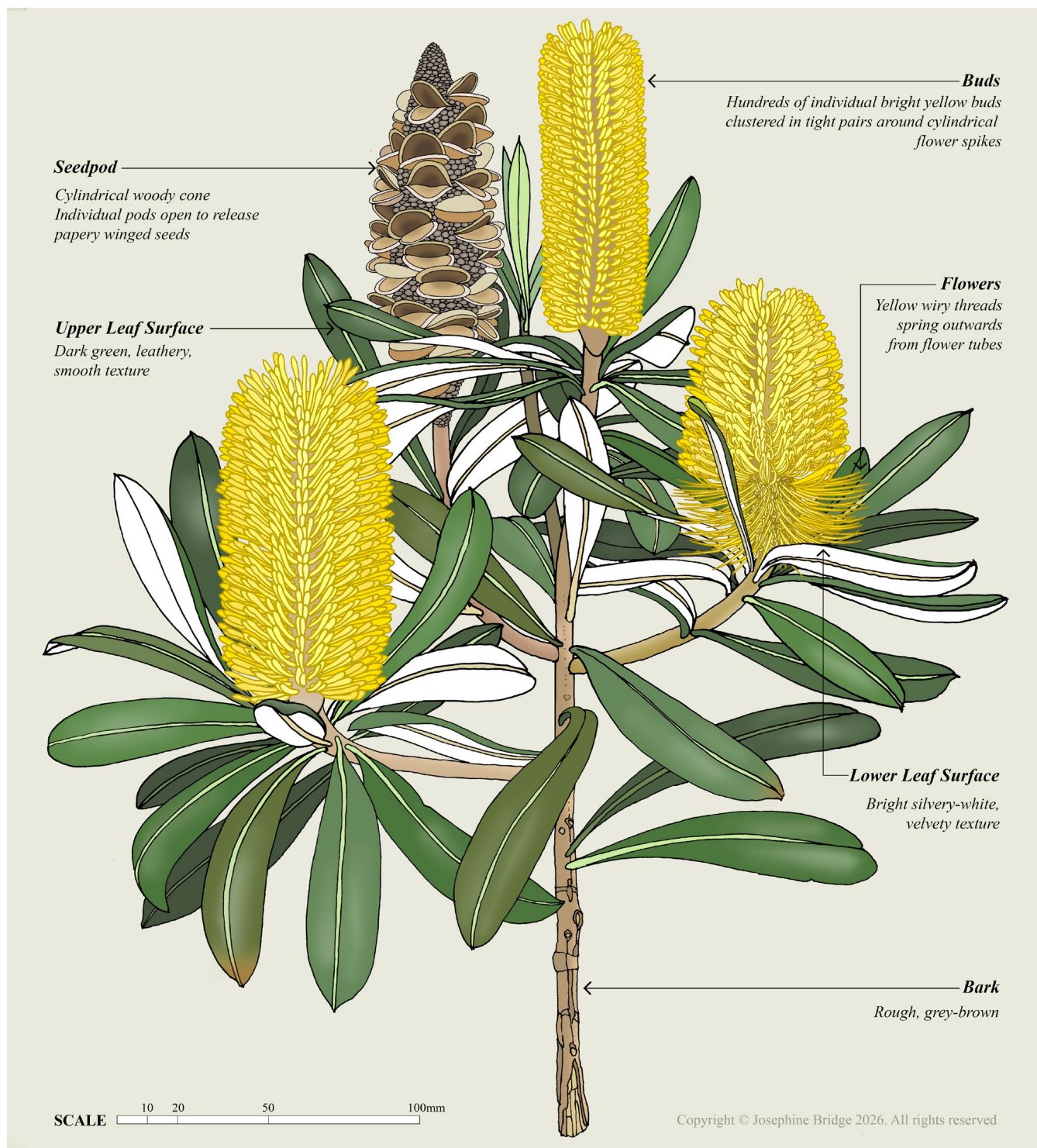


Mullet Mail

NEWS & VIEWS OF DANGAR ISLAND RESIDENTS

Ed. 91 Spring 2026
dangarislandleague.com



Mullet Mail acknowledges traditional custodians of country. Together we care for our island and river, for the future!
Always was, always will be, indigenous land.

Editorial

Cybele Shorter, Editor MM

Thank you everyone who contributes to the Mullet Mail. This edition is packed full of community activity and stories. We are growing in size every edition, getting really interesting content.

I hope you are also enjoying reading each others news. After you have finished with your Mullet Mail, try using the paper for craft, lining the compost or starting a fire so it gets a second use after reading. We have some more ideas for re-use brewing for future editions.

Thank to the team once again doing a brilliant job. Enjoy

P.S. We are still selling tea towels, so grab one or use the QR to send a donation if you can help keep us in print. >

Local Native Plant

Banksia Integrifolia

Jospehine Bridge

The Coast Banksia (cover illustration) is close to my heart, as it is the very first plant species on Dangar Island my mother taught me to identify. It is one of the more straightforward banksia species to recognise, thanks to its distinctive smooth-edged leaves, which are deep green above and silvery-white beneath. These pale undersides are velvety to the touch and flash strikingly when wind passes through the canopy. The species can grow up to 25 metres tall - I recently saw a very tall tree which had fallen down a steep slope during a storm - the inverted tree was hauntingly white, as if covered in a layer of snow.

Cover illustration: Jospehine Bridge, 'Banksia Integrifolia' See the beautiful colour version on the DIL website > Mullet Mail.



The genus 'Banksia' was named after English botanist Joseph Banks. The second part of this species' scientific name - integrifolia - is derived from the Latin meaning 'whole leaf,' referring to the smooth margins of its mature leaves. Juvenile plants are more difficult to distinguish from other Banksia species, as the young leaves have serrated edges.

Coast Banksia, also commonly known as Honeysuckle, is found along almost the full length of the east coast of Australia and is pollinated by insects and nectar-feeding birds. The bright yellow flower spikes have traditionally* been soaked in water to create a sweet drink, and the smouldering dried seed pods can effectively transport fire over long distances.

Interestingly, this is one of the few Banksia species which releases its seeds even in the absence of fire. Each capsule of the woody seed pod contains one to two seeds with papery wing-like attachments, allowing them to be picked up and dispersed by the wind.

* Indigrow plant info >



Reflections

Terry Stewart, President DIL



Not so long ago, Tim and I rented an apartment in Sydney. The building housed a "community" (I use that word generously) more than three times the size of Dangar Island.

A strata committee represented that community. I wonder how much influence they had, or if they even cared beyond collecting levies. I doubt they lobbied officials on behalf of residents, let alone had personal mobile numbers for direct access to the Mayor, councillors, senior government officials or local MPs.

Yet on Dangar Island, we do. It's not because we've shouted louder than everyone else (although occasionally we have had to), but because this community has earned the trust to be heard. Trust gives even the smallest community influence. It grows conversation by conversation, relationship by relationship.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.

- Margaret Mead

Building trust is easier if we assume good intent. We can disagree strongly without assuming those airing a view or making decisions are acting in bad faith. Listening and seeking to understand another perspective strengthens our position.

Courtesy is not capitulation.

We've challenged decisions, campaigned publicly for change and, occasionally, encountered people who were not prepared to give any ground – figuratively or otherwise.

Trusted relationships achieve results.

The League has worked to strengthen relationships beyond the island – throughout all levels of Hornsby Shire Council, with our Mayor and councillors, local MPs, Transport, Maritime, the Insurance Council and our neighbours in Brooklyn.

Many have visited our island, some several times, and we regularly visit them. Our local Councillor attends our monthly meetings. None of this happens because of one person or committee. Our reputation has been shaped by many people over many years, and carrying it forward is a collective responsibility.

Call for support.

Your DIL membership is \$15 well spent and buys so much more than a vote at the AGM. Your memberships supports the website, community email updates and printing of the Mullet Mail. Memberships can be paid for via the website, or follow the QR.



Our League Committee plays a key role.

This past year has shown that the best committees aren't made up of people who think alike, but people with different strengths.

Lisa is tenacious and navigates government with remarkable skill. Di brings infectious positivity and rolls up her sleeves. Wendy is fair-minded and brings the insight of a former councillor. Bronek is reliable, follows through and brings the wisdom of a former League president. David identifies what's important and has a gravitas that makes people listen. Pete brings boundless energy and turns ideas into action. Ken gets on with things and has an ability to cut to the heart of an issue. The collective experience and expertise extend way beyond these most basic observations.

We haven't always got it right, and I certainly haven't. I can think of conversations I've handled poorly, messages sent in frustration and times I should have listened more. Our responsibility is to listen, learn and do better next time.

I know some islanders have stepped away because of disagreements or experiences in the past. If that's you, I'd ask that you don't close the door. Your experience and perspective matter.

Our community is stronger when more people help shape its future.

The League doesn't create our character, it reflects it. That character is built every time someone volunteers, helps a neighbour, welcomes a newcomer, tries to resolve differences, or represents our island with kindness and integrity.

That's what people beyond the island notice. That's why they listen.

Maybe part of our strength is knowing that, no matter how strongly we disagree today, tomorrow we'll see each other on the ferry, at the Club, in the Hall, over a coffee at the Depot or plodding around the island.

Issues come and go. Relationships endure. May we never lose that.

We might not be changing the world, but we are being listened to.

P.S. And to the person who left the beautiful, anonymous thank-you card in our mailbox, I hope you're reading this. You epitomise everything that is right about our wonderful community. Random acts of kindness make both lives richer.



Baroona, Street of Bridges

Lila San Roque

Sometimes time with visitors can hang heavy on our hands. Don't these people realise we have no food and can't be bothered cooking? Luckily there is a new resource available for the entertainment of guests, or even for switching off and establishing connection with loved ones, through wholesome outdoor activities you can be proud to stage and share on social media: Baroona, Street of Bridges!



Stroll past the effortless elegance of more than 10 hastily constructed and largely functional structures. We offer the truly unique, self guided Street of Bridges tour, to take up more visitors' time and create a truly unique experience! Suitable for all ages.

Conversation Starters:

How many bridges can you see?

If you could join any two places in the world with a bridge, what would they be?

Can we make our own bridge?

Let's rate all the bridges out of 5 for comfort/wobbliness/beauty.

I'm a bit bored.

What even is a 'swale'?

Bridge trivia #1: The world's shortest international bridge is 10 feet long and links Spain and Portugal.

Bridge trivia #2: The grammatical gender of the word 'bridge' can influence the way bridges are conceptualised and described by speakers of different languages.

Or try our Bridge Activities:

Take pencil and paper, and run a sketching club

Create trolls from the completely unsuitable clay road surface.

Compose an ode to ditches.

Once you have crossed over you will never look back!

Baroona, Street of Bridges, welcomes you.

Top left: 'Emmigration' | Right: Baroona St. looking east
Photos: Cybele Shorter

Get Ready! Fire Season Ahead

Joshua Ginty and Nicola Cam
Dangar Island Rural Fire Brigade



The Australian Bureau of Meteorology officially declared El Niño to be underway in June this year. Most climate models show the 2026 event to continue strengthening and peak around late spring or early summer. For eastern Australia, El Niño is associated with below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures, meaning Dangar Island is therefore facing an increased chance of high fire danger days and less rainfall.

We live in a beautiful bush paradise, but tasting the smoke in the air and watching the news of 16 homes lost in just two hours during the Koolewong fire of December 2025 was a reminder to us all the need to be prepared.

Join members of the Dangar brigade at the Community Hall joining the DIG pop-up bake sale from 11am-2pm on Sunday 27th of September and discuss your fire plan. In addition to the yummy treats on offer from the DIG stall we are also looking forward to performances from both our beloved Warblers & the world-renowned Jazz Donkeys.

It can take as little as five minutes to make your plan. Get ahead of the curve and review online fire plan details ahead of time by using this QR link.



Above: Dangar Island and Deerubbin. Photo: Hilary Cam

On the day we will be providing advice on;

- Preparing your property
- Assistance with the NSW Hazards Near Me application
- Understanding fire danger rating systems and alerts
- Key decision points and checklists to determine when to leave.

We are grateful for the support from the Dangar Island Vehicle Management Committee who have allowed the brigade to offer free buggy services to and from the event for island residents, so no excuses for not dropping by.

We also have a beta release of an interactive digital map that we aim to use to advise the community where their closest hydrant is located, as well as record details of water tanks & solar installations on the island.

Don't wait until there is smoke in the air, join us on the 27th of September to ensure that you and your family know what you will do in the event of a fire.

**BOX
Divvy**
The Unsupermarket

Quality fruit & veg, bakery,
pantry and more
Buy online, delivered
to Brooklyn each Thurs



call Jona on 0404 719 997 or sign up ^here^

Power Outages: Resilience with Renewables

Ana Pollak, Yellow Bin Thursdays Discussion Group

Nigel Hancock from Pingala Community Energy will be coming to the island to talk:

2pm, Sat 10th October at the hall

...about how Pingala Community Agency (PCA) can help small communities like Dangar Island set up a new solar powered system. Nigel will explain possible arrangements, steps required for funding, ownership models and what would be involved in the building, e.g. what sized batteries are suitable.

The PCA have skilled staff to assist communities with setting up management of renewable projects, and funding applications. See link below. They can help us with the analysis and design of systems of shared energy.

Government funding for a Resilience project to help get Dangar Island Bushfire ready could be a good pitch to our local MP for funding.



Pingala Community Energy >

Thoughts of a consulting arborist

Chad Shakeshaft
Arbor Central

These are some ideas from someone who spends a fair amount of time walking around developments, construction sites, streets, commercial sites and backyards looking at trees, and probably thinking about them too much.

Drive through many established suburbs and a large part of what makes them desirable is obvious. Mature trees and established landscapes. Trees cool our streets and homes, reduce the urban heat-island effect, intercept stormwater, provide habitat and green corridors, improve amenity and contribute enormously to the character and value of the places in which we live.

We collectively value leafy suburbs, but individually, we don't always want the tree. Trees drop leaves and branches. They require maintenance. They shade things. Their roots grow where we don't necessarily want them. They occupy valuable space. They can constrain development and there can be genuine or perceived concerns about risk.

In Australia, we also have the very real issue of bushfire. Asset Protection Zones, vegetation management and the protection of people and property all need to be considered.

Sometimes we technically "retain" a tree while progressively removing the conditions that allowed it to become a large tree in the first place.

Large trees require substantial functioning environments below ground. Roots need soil volume, oxygen, moisture, nutrients and appropriate soil structure. We sometimes ask that same piece of ground to accommodate foundations, basements, pools, driveways, retaining walls, stormwater, sewer, electrical infrastructure, telecommunications, roads and pavement.

Trees are remarkably adaptable living organisms. They can tolerate disturbance, respond to injury and adjust to changing environments far better than they're sometimes given credit for.

But trees are not magic.

There are limits.

And the consequences aren't necessarily immediate.

Root loss, soil compaction, changes in grade, altered drainage, changes in soil chemistry and loss of usable soil volume can influence tree health and structural stability over many years. Sometimes the tree that becomes a problem ten years after development, wasn't a dangerous tree before.

Then there is the practical reality of actually building around retained trees.

Modern construction is built around efficiency.

We're asking people whose job is to build something efficiently to deliberately work slower and more carefully around a living system that they, often, can't even see until the ground is opened.

Sometimes that additional effort is absolutely justified to retain a significant mature tree.

But ideally, good planning provides enough space that construction and tree protection aren't constantly fighting over the same metre of ground.

Where we have the opportunity, large volumes of healthy, connected, uncompacted soil are incredibly valuable for trees' health.

And then we come to replacement planting.

A newly planted tree doesn't immediately replace the canopy, habitat, cooling, amenity and environmental functions of a mature tree that may have taken 50, 80 or 100 years to develop.

What we're actually planting is only the potential for future canopy. Whether that potential is ever realised depends heavily on what we provide that tree.

Arborists can specify an appropriate species and good-quality planting stock, but if it's allocated a tiny opening surrounded by pavement, services, compacted subgrade and concrete, we've already placed a fairly substantial limitation on what that tree can become.

Modern urban tree engineering is certainly improving. But even sophisticated engineering doesn't make the biological requirements of trees disappear.

Instead of simply asking: "How many replacement trees did we plant?" We should also ask: "How many of those trees have genuinely been given the opportunity to become large, healthy, mature trees?"

A mature tree can be removed in a day.

Replacing the functions of that tree may take decades.

Sometimes longer than our own working lives.

If I'm being truthful, earlier in my career my appreciation of a tree was often more about the challenge of climbing it, and safely dismantling it, than understanding its broader value within the landscape.

The more I've learnt about trees: physiology, soils, decay, biomechanics, ecology, habitat, hydrology, development impacts and how individual trees collectively form much larger environmental systems, the more my perspective has changed.

Working on a tree and deciding the long-term future of a tree are two very different responsibilities.

The more we understand about the natural environment, the easier it becomes to recognise that we aren't the only things trying to live in it.

Trees, soils, fungi, insects, birds and countless other organisms form incredibly complex systems around us. Finding the balance between human needs, development, safety and the natural environment is difficult.

Just some thoughts from a consulting arborist wandering around looking at trees.

Trees are what we do.

Moss Squad

Jude Prichard & Di Robertson
Bushcare



A recent flyer drew attention to concerns about the obvious wild spread of Spanish moss on Dangar Island, and asked residents to consider carefully managing it, or removing it from their property.

Many of the trees that are carrying and spreading the moss are on public land. Some of it is high in the treetops, so we are investigating possible ways of safely managing those harder-to-reach areas.

For those who have had Spanish moss spread to their garden and want help to remove it there are a small group of locals very happy to lend a hand — free of charge.

We've been encouraged by the participation of Islanders in managing the moss so far, so thank you to everyone who has been involved. We've even replaced the moss with a similarly coloured native plant for several residents.

Despite its name, Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) is neither Spanish nor a moss. It is an epiphytic bromeliad. It is listed as a weed by NSW WeedWise and is native to tropical and subtropical parts of the Americas. In Australia it was introduced as an ornamental garden plant and has since escaped into bushland in parts of northern Sydney.

Spanish moss grows by hanging from trees and absorbing moisture and nutrients from the air. While it can look attractive and may seem harmless, when it becomes established in large amounts it can have negative effects on native plants and bushland.

So, why are we concerned?

In heavy growth, Spanish moss can cover branches and reduce the amount of sunlight reaching a tree's

leaves, limiting photosynthesis and potentially affecting the health of the host tree. It can affect local ecosystems, including habitats and natural water and nutrient cycles, and may also influence fire behaviour.

It is of particular concern in critically endangered bushland in northern Sydney, including Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest and Blue Gum High Forest.

Spanish moss can spread quite easily. Wind can move both seeds and fragments into neighbouring trees and properties and people can unknowingly spread it by moving or sharing plants. Birds and possums can also carry it when collecting nesting material.

We've already found two possum dreys as well as a bird's nest containing Spanish moss, here on the island. Spanish moss has also appeared in Kiparra Reserve, which is particularly concerning. We've removed what we have spotted so far and will continue to keep an eye out for any more.

If you have any questions, would like a hand removing

some moss, or simply want to know more, have a chat with one of the Moss Squad: Jude, Janine, Vicky, Kylie, Mish, Stephen, David, Di, Chabela, Paul, Terry, Gerry, Roland or Craig.

Thanks to everyone who has helped so far. It's a small bit of community action that may make a real difference in keeping Dangar's trees, bushland and neighbouring parks healthy.



Chabela mossing around.
Photo: Jude Prichard

How to Help Us Help You.

What Happens When You Call 000

Liz Nolf and Aime Wee



When you call 000, our Community First Responders are often the first on scene ahead of the paramedics. Whether you're calling for yourself, a neighbour, or a loved one, a little preparation goes a long way. Here's what to know before, during, and after you call 000.

Before an Emergency Happens

The best time to prepare is now, not in the middle of a crisis.

Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the road, day or night. In the dark or in unfamiliar spots, this can be the difference between minutes saved and minutes lost.

Keep a written record of key medical details somewhere easy to find – by the phone or on the fridge is ideal. Even if you never need to call an ambulance, having this ready means it can be handed straight to First Responders in an emergency:

Personal: Full name (first, middle, last), Date of birth, Address

Medical: Conditions, Allergies, Current medications

Admin: Pension number, Medicare number, Health fund details

Keep medications together in one place if possible, so they can be quickly bagged up and handed to paramedics.



Monthly training scenario. | Photo: Aimee Wee

When to Call 000

In an emergency, you should always call 000 directly. If our Community First Responders are available, they'll be dispatched to your address and will care for you until the ambulance arrives.

If you're ever unsure whether a situation counts as an emergency, call anyway. It's always better to call and not need us than to hesitate and lose valuable time. Clear signs to call 000 may include chest pain, difficulty breathing, sudden weakness or slurred speech, severe bleeding, a serious fall or injury, or if someone is unconscious or unresponsive. Because we're on an island, help can take longer to arrive than it would on the mainland, so acting early makes a real difference.

For non-urgent health concerns, your GP or a health line is usually the better first call, but if in doubt, 000 is always the right choice.

While You Wait

These steps aren't essential. The most important thing is staying with the patient and staying on the line if asked. But if you're able to (or have someone else there with you), these steps can help enormously: Gather medications into a bag ready to hand to First Responders and paramedics. If you have time, write a list of any additional medications or medical history.

Have the patient's details ready – full name, date of birth, Medicare number, health fund and phone number are all things First Responders will ask for.

If there are multiple people around and it's dark or the property is hard to find, have someone wait outside to guide responders in. If you're on your own with the patient, don't leave their side to do this – your priority is staying with them.

Thank you for helping us help you.

If you'd like to be part of that effort, we're always looking for more hands.

Get in touch via dangarcfr33@gmail.com or phone Liz Nolf on 0402 290 200 to find out more about joining the Community First Responders.

Twilight Bowls

5:30 pm every Thursday

Order pizza and a drink at the bowling club and come down for some fun bowls on the green!

Season Kick Off **8th October** - when daylight savings has started

Everyone is welcome!

Thank you.

Terry Stewart
Dangar Island Bowlo



Thank you from the Dangar Island Bowling Club

As we close the books on another financial year, we want to say a very big thank you. For the second year running, the Club has finished in the black—the first back-to-back profits in at least 14 years.

That has been possible because people keep supporting the Club: everyone who drops in for a drink or meal, attends events, or volunteers their time behind the scenes.

A healthier bank balance helps tackle deferred maintenance and replace aging equipment, including; roof and electrical repairs, exhaust fan repairs, new carpet, a new beer chiller, ice machine and projector, and it keeps our staff employed through winter.

The Club is a finely balanced operation. Rising costs or fewer people through the door can quickly change things, and in years gone by the Club has come uncomfortably close to insolvency. So we need to keep evolving and trying new things - such as more outdoor dining and an improved performance space - while holding on to the character that makes the Club what it is. The Board is also looking at new initiatives that will enhance what the Club provides for members - more details to follow as we head into summer.

Extended Summer Opening Hours begin 10th September:

Thursday: 6 - 9pm pizza night, kitchen till 8.30pm

Friday: 6 - 9pm, kitchen till 8.30pm

Saturday: noon - 9pm, kitchen till 2.30pm,
+ 6 - 8.30pm, members' happy hour 5 - 6pm

Sunday: noon - 3.30pm, kitchen till 2.30pm



Stiff Gins; Kaleena Briggs and Nardi Simpson

Come along, eat and drink, or support one of our upcoming events, including the traditional Ocktoberfest, Stiff Gins & Chloe Gill in October and The Catholics in November. Full details on the Club website (see QR link).

If you would like to volunteer, or perhaps consider joining the Board in future, speak to any Board member. We are always keen to welcome new expertise and people willing to roll up their sleeves.

The Dangar Island Bowling Club is represented by Licensee (Brett South) and Board (Deb Dubois, Jock Brown, Stephen Boyle, Steve Griffiths, Sunny South, Terry Stewart, Wendy McMurdo)

October-November ticketed events:

Ocktoberfest - Sun 4th Oct

Ray Beadle - Sun 11th Oct

Stiff Gins (pictured) - Sun 25th Oct

The Gadflys - Sun 8th Nov

Paco Lara's Flamenco Ensemble - Sun 15th Nov



Ready in red for the Wuthering | photo Therese Rutledge

Wuthering!

Cybele Shorter

We wuthered our second wintery Kate Bush wonder dance. Capably lead by dance master Kim (backwards pterodactyl) Wilson, and band lead Liz (twenty fingers) Nolf on piano.

Therese Rutledge commented 'To me the afternoon is pure joy, it's inclusive and fun for all ages, I hope we continue to twirl in red every year with friends and neighbours on Dangar'.

Make It Darker

Review: DangarNoire Cabaret - The Sound of Murder

Jack Smith, former US special counsel/ drama critic (aka Craig San Roque)



Winter Cabaret (left to right); Roxy (aka Victor); Robin, Charlotte, Jo, Graham; Steve | Photos Bill Lynn-Robinson

'I don't know who I am' - performer complaint.

Pandora's Box

This Cabaret released a swarm of interpretation, a plague of uncertainty. Imagine 4 Acts x 4 Characters + extras x 30 performers = 480 interpretations (+/-) multiplied by 150 audience witnesses = 72, 000 eye witness statements (+/-) - all masterfully agreed to by Maestro God-Bolt.

Act 1. The Mechanical Murders aka Tinny Murder
Act 2. Detectives Revenge aka Where the Hell is My Husband

Act 3. Casablanca Gin Joint aka Falling in Death Again

Act 4. He Had it Coming aka Cell Block Tango
Thirty Songs/ Four + Crimes /Four Card Trick Characters; Man in Tinny, Gangster, Detective, Femme Fatale / Multiple Casualties; Husband, Lost Lover, Bogart, Slippery Dave, Renko Stu, Dom di Mobbio, Big Jim. . . all dead multiple times.

Big Jim received the Nobel Peace Prize; stating '*I unleashed 12 wars and made just peace.*'

Sirens in Berlin

"This I recall," said Jack Smith " The Cabaret Chorus, in magnificent form, stars appearing in New York; a funeral in Las Vegas; Police Lineup in Chicago, women in black lining a Kings Cross Strip Bar. That Casablanca Gin Joint . . . Dietrich. Men of dark intent

disappearing, falling, gunshot, blade, cyanide kiss. Make it darker. Agony in tango chagrin. That gravel voice. That double bass. That cello, violin, brass, piano, drum, sonorous guitar - Blues and Blood. That glorious chorus stumbling over steps, panache in the dark; silent witness to every crime. Where the hell is my husband?"

The Truth

The truth lies like fish wrapped in the Daily Telegraph. Despite 72,000 potential meanings in this age of dis-information. Despite the flooding of the zone -. the decode clue the Cabaret is the one truth - Amerika invaded Brooklyn. First Responders responded. We stopped Big Jim in his tracks. A foreign power's attempt to commandeer Club, Papeete, Casablanca, Renko and The Sun - was justly foiled. (Only just). The Cabaret was a trumpet call - Do not surrender - take up your music - be vigilant. So Be It!

Post script - Recovering the Body.

You may have noticed that immediately after the Cabaret, men disguised as council workers began digging up the roads, scouring ditches, searching for a shallow grave.

Question - which foreign power is looking for Jim?

Open Mic Nights 2 - Mother Pluckers

Di Robertson explores the bands, people and stories forged at Dangar Island Open Mic Night.

In the last edition of Mullet Mail, we explored some of the history of Open Mic Night, which began back in 2009. This month, we take a light-hearted wander through the story and evolution of one of Dangar Island's home-grown bands. The Mother Pluckers first took to the Open Mic stage in 2013, bringing more women, more instruments and plenty more laughs to the island's music scene. Multi-instrumentalist Judy Lattas tells their story...

In June 2012 a bunch of Dangar Island women broke through the norms of men-and-their-guitars at Open Mic. They were the Dangri-Lahs (Mel Anderson, Marina Garvey, Jane Drummond, Di Robertson, Michele Rumsey and Kim Wilson, pictured below performing "These Boots Are Made for Walking"). Kim's bass could barely be heard because she was too intimidated to tell the bloke who had set up the equipment that she'd never used an amp before, and had no idea what any of the knobs did.



Following in the Dangri-Lah boot steps were the Motherpluckers, debuting in June 2013.

We were Michelle Ramage, Kim Wilson, Judy Lattas and Chris Sanderson.

We put together our favourite songs (especially by Patti Smith and P J Harvey), prioritising female artists who were rarely being played at OMN. We also featured the odd country number with fiddle and uke in the mix.

Pauline Foote brought us a bit more oomph in 2014 - after coming home from a trip to find a full drumkit set up in her lounge room, she got the hint. Liz Nolf found us almost a decade after we began, with her particular forms of music therapy: more instruments, more musicianship, and more laughs. There have been blistering vocals from Other Pluckers over the years, including Zena Smith in the early days, and Anna Feord more recently.



Particularly memorable was an Open Mic night with Bronnie Peddley's women's soccer team raucously cheering us on. And a rehearsal when a couple of local 9 or 10 year old boys burst in on us, danced around with their hoodies over their heads, and took off again!

It's wonderful to see more and more women take to the stage at Open Mic and other events on the island. And don't be afraid to ask how an amp works!



Left: Early days (L to R) Christine, Michelle, Zena, Judy and Kim
Top: Hard core 4, once Pauline Foote joined: Kim, Michelle, Pauline and Judy. Above: Quintessential quintet Mother Pluckers: Michelle, Kim, Liz, Pauline and Judy.

The Rescue Routine

Jake Lloyd, Marine Rescue
Hawkesbury

Many people who live on the river volunteer in some way to support their local community. I chose the local Marine Rescue Unit.

When I am on watch I rise at dawn and don my blue uniform, down to the jetty and into the boat, shivering in the morning mist as I make my way to our base at Mooney Mooney. The Hawkesbury River is breathtakingly beautiful but it's a bit cold!

At the base my comrades gather around the bbq to catch up and share a laugh, drinking coffee and eating the bacon and egg rolls provided by Mr Fawcett, our Duty Officer. At 8am the Duty Officer briefs us, we sort ourselves into crews for the radio room and the two rescue boats, and the boat crews make their way down to the wharf and out onto the river.

That's the usual routine for me, one weekend per month, dawn till dusk. We patrol all the way up past Spencer and out into the open ocean. Of course the routine is usually soon disrupted; someone flags us down or the radio crackles into life to tell us that a boat is in trouble and needs our help. Often it's just a flat battery or a lack of petrol but sometimes it is much more serious.

When we're not rescuing someone we train, patrol, clear navigation hazards, and help out on community events like the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic. We don't enforce laws or rules, that's the job of Maritime and the Police. We are only out there to help people. At most we might advise you to put life jackets on the children but that's about it.

Every volunteer knows we face risk, we know it all too well after the tragic loss of two of our comrades up North, but we are well trained and well equipped for the jobs we need to do and we have trust in our skippers and crewmates. As the sun begins to sink, I make my way back home in my little boat in the gathering dark.

Those of us who live close to the base are always on call. If there is a medical emergency we will transport the paramedics and help evacuate the patient. Being out on the river at night is usually very peaceful and beautiful but requires skill and care to navigate in the darkness.

You can support our work by helping us pay for fuel and by following us on Facebook. If you're fit and able you could join our unit. All the training you will need is provided. People with local knowledge and boating experience are highly valued.



Marine Rescue Hawkesbury Facebook >
Above: Jann French at the helm | photo MerJa Media



H5N1 Bird Flu and Australian Wildlife

Ron Barelle and Kim Dahl provide an abridged version of a post by Liam Ferguson for The Biodiversity Council

H5N1 bird flu is a strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza that once primarily impacted poultry, but has since evolved to infect wild birds and mammals. Since late 2020, this variant has spread globally, killing millions of wild birds and tens of thousands of mammals.

Australia reported its first mainland case of H5N1 in June 2026, in a migratory brown skua on the southern coast of Western Australia.

As of mid-July 2026, more than a dozen cases have been confirmed in migratory birds and the first case in a wild, non-migratory mainland bird was confirmed in Robe, South Australia. There has been no evidence yet of large-scale wildlife deaths on the mainland.

The risk of H5N1 bird flu to people is very low. There have been no documented cases of the new variant spreading from person to person.

You can still walk your dog but keep it on a lead for its protection. Do not let pets touch or eat dead or dying birds, or swim where sick birds have been seen. H5N1 bird flu typically only spreads to people and pets through close contact with sick birds, so avoid contact.

Preferably do not feed wild birds at this time, because feeding draws birds close together and helps disease spread. Bird baths may still be used if you clean them frequently. This advice may change as the situation develops. Always thoroughly wash your hands with soap before and after handling birds or any water and feed that birds have used, including bird baths.

If you find a sick or dead bird:

AVOID contact, including leashing pets where infected animals may be present

RECORD what you see, the location and take photos from a distance

REPORT to Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888

Please do not collect, move or bury carcasses yourself – trained authorities manage that.

Hawkesbury Diversity

Ana Rubio, Hornsby Council

New Study Reveals the Hidden Biodiversity of the Hawkesbury River

Hornsby Shire Council has partnered with Southern Cross University (SCU) researchers, who were interested in exploring and quantifying the marine biodiversity of the Hawkesbury estuary. SCU in partnership with the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has completed an innovative monitoring program to better understand the health of the Hawkesbury River, as part of the NSW Estuarine Asset Protection Program (see QR link).

Using a combination of conventional monitoring methods and cutting-edge environmental DNA (eDNA) technology, researchers collected samples from across the estuary to identify the plants, animals and microorganisms that call the estuary home and to establish a new biodiversity baseline. The project also analysed water samples, sediment cores and pollutants.

The study detected an incredible 3150 different taxa from 215 samples collected throughout the Hawkesbury River. This included 102 fish species, 18 mammal species, more than 500 plant species, along with crustaceans, molluscs, algae, fungi and hundreds of types of bacteria.

The lower estuary, near the river mouth, consistently supported the highest biodiversity. Researchers also detected threatened species, including the endangered Cauliflower Soft Coral and the vulnerable Grey-headed Flying Fox.

The monitoring program identified 26 pest species in the estuary, including European Carp, Yellowfin Goby and several invasive plants. This information will help guide future management and conservation efforts. The results provide an important snapshot



SCU researchers on Hawkesbury River, with Ana Rubio from HSC

of estuary health and will help track environmental changes over time. Community members can explore the findings through a dedicated interactive data portal: Explore the **Data Portal** (see QR link)

With ongoing monitoring, Council and its partners will continue to build knowledge of the Hawkesbury River and help protect this important estuary for future generations.



< Species data portal

DPIRD Estuarine Asset Protection Program >



Dagmar Reinhardt, 'Mackeral', linocut from the series "Dangar Monstarium" 2026.



Random mentions of the island no. 6

Rose Curtis, Research Archivist, DIHS

This article turned up when searching the National Library's Trove database for mentions of Dangar Island.

*

NUDE MEN ON HAWKESBURY RIVER
REPORT TO POLICE OBJECTIONABLE CONDUCT

Reports of the disgusting conduct of a launch party of 10 nude men, who, it is alleged, toured the Hawkesbury River on Sunday, are being forwarded to the Commissioner of Police (Mr. Childs) by indignant residents and picnic parties.

"These men not only swam in the nude but stood up on the top of the launch in disgusting poses. One man appeared to be particularly proud of a chest covered with black hair," declared a resident of Dangar Island.

In a letter to Mr. Childs, the resident states: —

"A number of them swam across to Brown's Baths and struggled over the wire into the pool that had been rented by a week-end party of ladies and gentlemen.

Became Abusive

"Some members of the Amateur Fishermen's Association who have been on the river for years could not recall more deliberately disgusting behavior."

The launch it is alleged, belongs to the Fisheries Department, and is well known along the river, where it is engaged in upholding the law as far as the Fisheries Department is concerned.

The Fisheries Department stated that no report had been received regarding the matter.

*

Source: The Sun, 27 January 1931, p 9.

Note: Keen readers will have noticed this behaviour occurred on 26 January 1931. While Victoria adopted January 26 as "Australia Day" in 1931, New South Wales celebrated the January 26 date as "Anniversary Day".



Seven naked male swimmers on Hawkesbury riverbank around 1890-1900. Source: Hawkesbury Library Service. Photographer: George Edward Woodhill.

Note: The photo is NOT of the nudes mentioned in the article but is included here to give an idea of what confronted island residents. It was taken at least 30 years earlier and does not include a hairy chested man as mentioned in the newspaper report. An unaltered image can be found by following the QR link below.

*

Destiny Rogers in her December 2023 article published in QNews comments:

For reasons unknown, the above image includes two fully dressed older men posed behind the swimmers like big game hunters with their trophies.

Source: <https://qnews.com.au>

Further historical research reveals the Amateur Fisherman's Association bought the fourth block of land sold from the first subdivision of the island. The committee purchased lot 6 and towards the end of 1922 began building a club house.

Below, an aerial photo in 1937, a few years after the naked incident, shows the island still has very few houses built. One of them would be the Amateur Fisherman's Association clubhouse.



"The Hawkesbury River Railway Bridge. Dangar Island in the Centre. Long Island in the far distance." Source: Sydney from the air, second series, Sydney Morning Herald, 1937.



< original image



More photos of Sydney from the air >

New Gallery: TWIG

Ron and Jan Barrelle

A small modern gallery, to be known as Twig, will be opening in the CBD, at 2 Neotsfield Avenue, on the first weekend in October.

It will feature the works of the artistic talent of the Island, and showcasing a medley of work from local talent, and Greg Hyde, an established artist from Bathurst.

Jan and Ron Barrelle have done this before, and it was hugely successful, and well loved. Their aim is to enhance the Island's current reputation for the arts and performances, and to create an environment to promote local artistic talent in a professional manner and donate from proceeds to various voluntary organisations such as Sydney Wildlife Rescue.

Opening 3pm Saturday 3rd October

All very welcome.

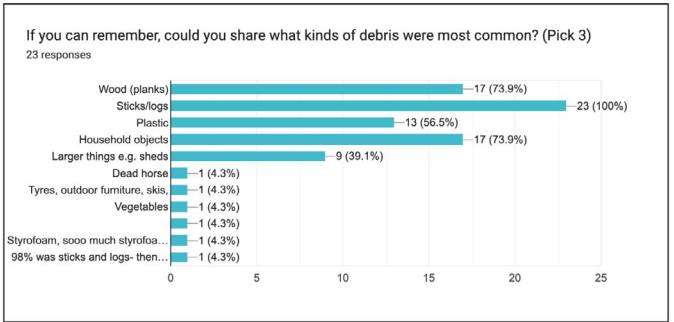
Dangar Debris

Roland Haskett

What's the craziest thing you've seen floating down the river? In July, I asked Dangar residents to complete a survey about the impact that floods and debris have on our daily lives and the river environment. I thought I'd share some of the responses with you:

One of the questions was about the flotsam and jetsam (and sheds) people had seen floating down the river. And what a diverse range it is! Plenty of veggies, fridges, oil tanks... Multiple spa sightings, too.

Another question was on the most common kinds of debris. Overall, wooden objects were most common, followed by plastic items. And, of course, sheds.



Those are just two questions, but you can see the rest of the responses below and If you'd like to do the survey, just for fun, you can find it here.



< See the results



Take the survey, just for fun >

Studio Doors Open on Dangar this Summer

Sunny South

From November, my Small Stills studio at Trevally House (25 Yallaro Pde) will be opening its doors to visitors— weekends, holidays, and other days through summer, whenever I'm in and painting.

There's no set roster of days or hours. Keep an eye out for a small A-frame sign at my gate — if it's out, I'm open and you're welcome to pop in. There's something lovely about the interruption of a visitor and a chance to talk about art, the island, and what's on the easel that day.

Get in touch if you'd like to be part of it — find me on Instagram: @smallstills_art

email: onthehawkesbury@gmail.com or pop by my studio for a chat.



Bangalow Palm Vessels and coil basket great seasonal gifts!

Elizabeth Ellean

Come along to a workshop and turn Bangalow palm into a vessel and reuse household castoffs to stitch a coiled basket.

Hosted by Dangar Island locals and in cooperation with Trevally House for a limited number of participants suitable adults and young ones 12 years and up.



10 am - 4pm
Saturday 5th
December
at Trevally House
25 Yallaro Pde

Your teacher Elizabeth will guide you through the steps to form a vessel from the Bangalow palm sheath. In a second session on same day explore the benefits and possibilities to use recycled fabrics rope and plastics to make your own coil stitched basket. All materials provided.
Enquiries: onthehawkesbury@gmail.com

6 Guitars #1 - The Signature Model

Jonathan Sykes

Chris's PRS Custom CE 22 9-string in Red Metallic 4-way pickup configuration, 1 volume, 1 tone/push-pull. You'll have seen PRS guitars in the part of the shop you're not allowed in, behind the velvet rope, but for Chris the legendary PRS premium quality is just the starting point. This instrument was custom built for him at the Paul Reed Smith (PRS) Maryland factory, after a long partnership with the brand, and it's truly one of a kind. All guitarists dream of cutting a double-necked guitar in half lengthways and making it into a single-necked guitar, but Chris has made that dream a reality. The top three strings are coursed with a second octave string each, producing that rich, chiming 12-string sound, while allowing unfettered solo shredding on the as-normal G, B and high E. With a push-pull tone knob that switches between single coil and humbucking, and out-of-phase pickups, the result is a truly expansive tone palette.

We might need to return to Chris in future; over the years he's collected a 32-fret Hondo Longhorn, and a Gibson SGRD with built-in Moog expander! But for now follow the QR code to hear Chris demo the 9-string PRS, and dive even deeper into this unique build.



Left: 9 String guitar head | Right: 9 string guitar body

Dear P.H

Marina Garvey

As a signed-up member of the reinvigorated C.O.W party and as such someone with more than a passing interest in matters of age, I feel compelled to give you some timely tips on how to make better use of the spotlight which you seem so tenaciously intent on claiming. Let's start by talking about your cultivation of the 'monobrow'. Now, P.H, this is not a new thing, we have been dealing with its stubble for decades, but you are clearly being fooled by it, and this points not only to a worrying lapse of judgement on your part but also to an ignorance of history. Let me just say that the virulence of its 'jackboot-I-belong-here' growth, its insistence on thickening straight lines, its refusal to acknowledge and accommodate the contours of existing bone structure is entirely swamping your face and sadly any hint of additional fineness that might have once distinguished your features is being completely erased. I might also take the liberty of adding that it is useful every now and then to remind ourselves of the unforgiving nature of the spotlight and make those necessary adjustments that maturity, hopefully, brings. For example, you might consider the set of your jaw, the increasing tension that is pressing your

lips into those thinning ever hardening lines and then ask yourself where this tightness comes from and the meanness of spirit suggested by it - what fears do you harbour PH? What slights do you feed on? And on a more banal note, is that particular shade of blood red quite necessary? Equally concerning is the vexed question of skin tone, especially when under the revealing glare of the spotlight. Your tendency to uniformly cloak yourself in red, white and blue is limiting and leaves you looking pinched, sallow-skinned, some would say lifeless even. Imagine the nuance and richness achieved through embracing not only an earthier colour palette but one that includes a rainbow sky, imagine the way this could lift and soften and then breathe new life into your own flagging skin? Perhaps you need a holiday, P.H? Oh, that's right, I forgot - you have just returned from one! Yours truly, MG – C.O.W Party Alliance (Cranky Old Woman's Party) affectionately known as C.O.W Magic P.S – new members welcome – age no barrier.

THE TICKET

Bruce Lambert

'Don't forget the ticket' the old woman said. Mumbling to herself as she climbed into bed. 'How many years have we bought them and never a brass razoo? It's as if the luck of the Irish never rubbed off on you'. But Paddy had a secret he was keeping to himself. The Lotto numbers had come up and they would soon be into wealth. 'Don't forget the ticket' the old woman said once more. Grumbling to herself as she pushed him out the door. Now Paddy had a problem the ticket he had mislaid. He knew he had the numbers but still he was afraid. If only he could find it his wife would never know. All that money just waiting while he tried to put on a show. But Bridie had a secret too fed up with his idleness. She craftily arranged the scene to give him a little stress. The house had never looked so clean as he scoured the drawers in vain. Both cupboards and shelves he emptied which led to his wife's refrain. 'That ticket is quite safe with me, just see what you could do'. No amount of nagging yet incentive carries through.

The Mullet Mail is...

Created by the community - through your submissions and is put together by Cybele Shorter, Genevieve Ginty, Kathy Merrick, Jonathan Sykes, Chabela Torres, Marina Garvey, Sam Icklow and Ken Smith. We are able to stay in print through the generous sponsorship of these orgainsations: Dangar Island League; Dangar Island Rural Fire Brigade, and; Dangar Island Bowling Club. You can also support us through making a direct donation using this QR.



River Song

Benjamin Martin

I don't suppose a river knows where it's going or where it's been Or does it remember every meander Each part touched all things seen Does it speak to each rock an old friend known for years Does it greet the changing shoreline met with wonder or mournful tears Can it feel the drops of rain kin, falling from sky Does it hear the passing boats? Does it ask why? In its depths does it carry memories, language, pain? Whilst busy people splash about delighting in their play And when it meets the open sea fresh mixing with brine Does it feel home? Time, after time after time.

Send us your...

Submissions: Tell us a story. Show us something that interests or amuses you or that you have created. Tell us why you moved to Dangar Island. List 10 things on your work table and include a photo. Share births, deaths and marriages. Events: Please send a run-down of your upcoming event (what - where - when - why) for inclusion on the back page and the website. Summer edition deadline is Friday 13th November Send submissions to mulletmail2020@gmail.com.

Births, Deaths, Marriages

We invite contributions on an ongoing basis, to honour our population of island inhabitants.

Alan Sykes 1939-2026, Sony award-winning broadcaster.

My father recently died after a long illness. He lived quite a big life, and telling it has helped me with my grieving process - Jonathan Sykes

Alan was born in Oldham, UK in 1939. Raised an only child to hairdresser Alice and insurance salesman Fred, young Alan became a leading light of local theatre, a handy golfer and, always the sign of a mis-spent youth, an ever-present threat at the snooker table. He took elocution lessons, a brave step for a speccy-four-eyes in a 1950s industrial town, but it was to be the birth of a voice career spanning half a century.

He trained as a teacher at St Johns College, York, where he learned an invaluable skill: sleeping all the way through from Tuesday chuck-out to Thursday morning. I remember as a boy shaking him awake on a Sunday afternoon and him, decades after college, spluttering, "Is it Wednesday?"

When his teaching career bored him, and now married to teacher Maureen, he joined the BBC World Service as a cadet announcer, and when the BBC launched local radio in 1970, Alan's was the first voice heard on BBC Radio Manchester

Alan and Maureen raised 3 sons in suburban Saddleworth, throwing themselves into key roles at the Saddleworth Players, where Alan grew into a talented sound engineer. After a decade in local radio, Alan moved up two floors at the BBC. As Network Announcer North, he fronted the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra under Ted Downes (Royal Opera House, Opera Australia), taking him from Orkney to the announcer's box at Royal Albert Hall, and all across Europe. In the linked video, you can see and hear Alan presenting the Syd Lawrence Orchestra on BBC Radio 2 in 1990. A year later he won a Sony award for his documentary on Frank Sinatra.

Adept at languages, Alan followed his first retirement with a second career in multilingual voiceover, all the while recording syndicated weekly radio shows in his home studio. The family was blessed with grandchildren, and the empty nest and a new millennium saw Alan retire again, this time with Maureen to Andalusia, Spain.

Here Alan's life unfortunately met significant setbacks: a commercial dispute incurring a 6-figure fine; two vehicle accidents, including a near drowning; falling victim to a financial scam; and finally a stroke that left him hemiplegic. Alan and Maureen fought these reversals through the COVID-19 pandemic,



Alan and baby Jonathan 1965

sustained only by cold beer and sunshine, until Alan returned home to live out his days in a Lancashire care home, up a ram's bottom – I beg your pardon, in Upper Ramsbottom, near Bury.

The last years were surely not what Alan saw for himself as he strode the fairways of the Lleyen peninsula, drove the family to Spain towing a camp trailer, hushed a packed Royal Albert Hall, or back-announced American Pie with a time call and the weather. But it doesn't matter. He aimed at life and most of the time he hit the target.

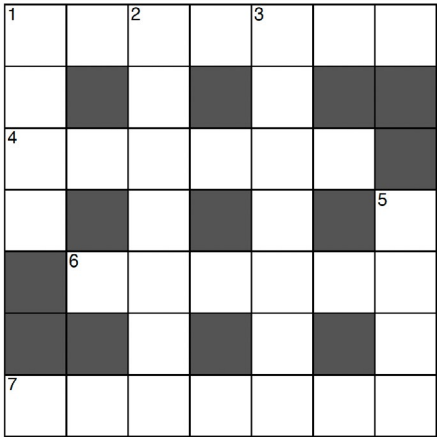
He was, to quote his Radio Manchester sign-off, ginger-peachy.

Alan is survived by his wife of 65 years, Maureen, his three sons, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Cryptic Puzzle #37

By Zygote

Zygote has been helping Chico from time to time, and now here's Zygote's first full puzzle in print, fresh from a feature spot on Crosshare.org You can try other Zygote puzzles there too, along with thousands of others, all free.



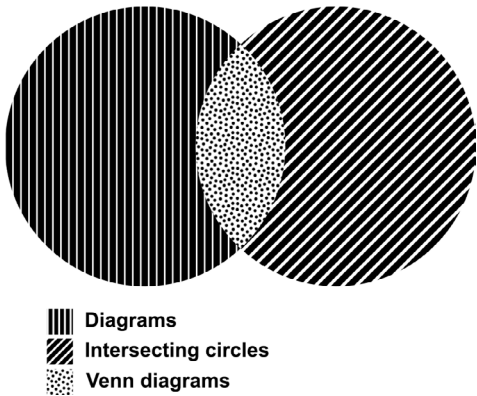
Across

- 1 Be silent to listen or take earth to heart? (7)
- 4 First shows ends of smoked cigarette before returning stub (6)
- 6 "Strange French headwear" for \$1000 Alex! (6)
- 7 Rachel ate donut, vomited deadly disease (7)

Down

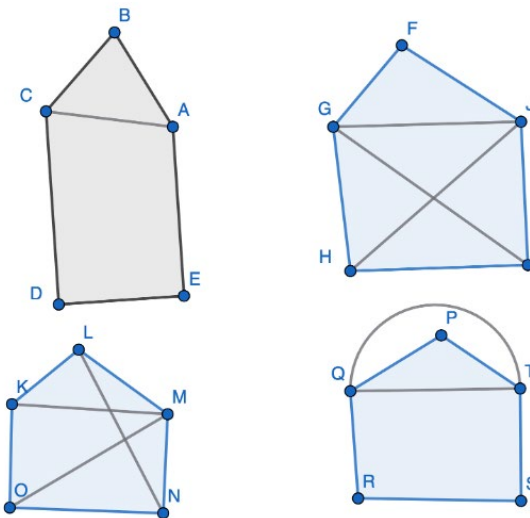
- 1 A German car found by police investigator following gold (4)
- 2 Risotto maker taking dose of phobarb or iodoquinol (7)
- 3 Church display is relatable but for the French (7)
- 5 Headless like a bed that needs assembly perhaps? (4)

Recursion



Diagrams
Intersecting circles
Venn diagrams

Caption | Jonathan Sykes



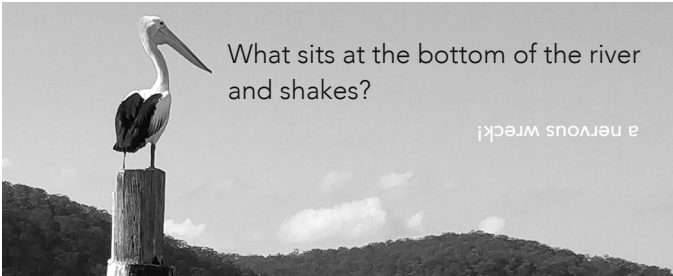
Travelling on each road once and only once.

Tom Garvey

Try the old trick. Start somewhere on a drawing and try to travel each road once and only once. I'm saying the first 1,2 and 4 are OK but the 3rd one I can't manage.

Roads only meet at a designated town.

- i) Beside each point (town) write how many roads start or end at that point
- ii) So for the first one you will have A 3. B 2. C 3. D 2. E 2.
- iii) When you drew a complete trip on the first graph, did it start and end on A and C (or C and A)?
- iv) For drawings 2, 3 and 4 list the number of roads which go there. Can you see a reason why number 3 might be impossible?
- v) Talk to mum or dad (a reasonable person) and try to convince them why a puzzle which we can solve must have 0 or 2 odd numbered points. Does the reasonable person agree that the 3rd drawing is impossible? If you convinced the Reasonable Person, was that a proof?



BBC Radio >



The Mullet Mail is printed sustainably by Black Rainbow on 100% recycled paper using 100% solar power and non-toxic inks. Colour editions are available to view on the DIL website

Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Saturdays	Sundays
Weekly						
8-9am: Yoga Anna Feord in the Hall	8-9am: Yoga w/ Summer Day at 9 R'view		9-10am: Exercise Brae Celeste in the Hall	8-9am: Yoga Anna Feord in the Hall		10am: DiG Mish, Stephen or Janel at DiG
7.30pm: Warblers Liz Nolf in the Hall	2-4pm: Ping Pong Graham Morey in the Hall	7-9pm: Bridge Dave Reynolds or David Rupp in the Hall	5.30pm: Twilight Bowls + 6-8.30pm Pizzas Bowling Green / Club	7-9pm: Verandah Jam Bowling Club (except 1st Fridays)		
Yellow Bin Week			7.30: Yellow Thursday Discussion Night Martin Lloyd in the Hall			
Green Bin Week			7.00: Cinemateque in the Hall (until 10/12)		3-5pm: Sip & Sew Fernanda Walsh in the Hall	
Monthly			Every 1st Friday 7pm: Open Mic Night	Every 2nd Saturday 9am - Bushcare Riverview track to Reserve	Every 1st Sunday 9am: DIL Committee on the Club Verandah 9am: RFB in the Fire Shed	Every 2nd Sunday 9-12 - CFR In the Hall
Happenings & Occurrances						
	DiG Pop-up Bake Sale + RFB Get Ready Weekend 11-2 Sunday 27th September at the Hall (p 4)		Bulky Waste Collection Wednesday 23rd Sep Kerbside (p 19)	Dagmar Reinhardt Now until - 26th Sep Dangar Island Depot	Twig Gallery Opening 3pm Saturday 3rd October 2 Neotsfield Ave (p15)	
Exhibition Call-out 27th Sep - 8th Nov Dangar Island Depot	Daylight Savings starts Sunday 4th October	Oktoberfest 12pm Sunday 4th Oct The Bowlo (p 9)	Resilience with Renewables 10am Saturday 10th October in the Hall (p 4)		Ray Beadle 12pm Sunday 11th Oct The Bowlo (p 9)	Planned Power Outage 7am - 5pm Monday 12th Oct
Festival of the Hall Sunday 18th Oct Save the Date - details TBC	Stiff Gins 12pm Sunday 25th Oct The Bowlo (p 9)		The Gadflys Sunday 8th Nov The Bowlo	Paco Lara's Flamenco Ens. Sunday 15th Nov The Bowlo	DiG Summer Market 10-2 Sunday 15th Nov at the Hall	Angela Brinn 9th Nov - 24th Dec Dangar Island Depot

Aren't we lucky! To join any of the weekly, fortnightly or monthly events, either turn up or message the host to find out more. One-off events may be ticketed. Check the article for details.