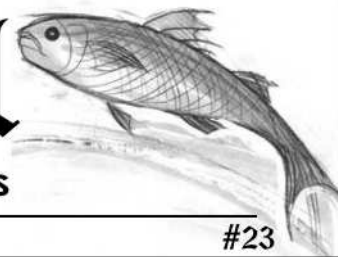




# Mullet Mail



NEWS & VIEWS OF DANGAR ISLAND RESIDENTS

www.dangarislandleague.net

Autumn 2008

#23

## COMMUNITY VEHICLE ONE YEAR OLD

### Happy Birthday!

*You're beautiful bright yellow and flash gaily along our streets.*

The long awaited community vehicle was welcomed onto the island just 1 year ago. In that time it has: provided 'on call' service Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8.30am-7.30pm; assisted in numerous house to ferry journeys for people going to and from hospital and supported the SES and Electricity workers who have the unenviable job of trying to locate properties on Dangar. Fire, Police and Ambulance services all hold a key to the vehicle, and it has been integrated into their capacity for response.

With the ongoing support of our precious volunteer drivers we are very close to raising the \$5,000 target for our repairs and maintenance fund. After meeting this goal we will begin to reimburse Hornsby Council as per the vehicle rental agreement.

To ensure successful management of the community vehicle:

The vehicles mobile phone must be switched on and carried with the driver at all times in case of emergency callout.	Fees need to be collected and entered for each journey.
It must not be used for carting building gear, household removals and anything that may damage it (use the ute).	As a legally registered vehicle, all passengers must travel within the vehicle, with children in particular, safely restrained.

Work with your neighbours - train as drivers and help each other outside the days of our rostered service.

### Look after it, support it, enjoy it.

To keep this wonderful service going we need a new coordinator as Jude is going away. This requires only a couple of hours effort a month. It involves being the conduit with Councils works department, drawing up the volunteer roster, and making occasional calls. Call Jude (9985 7879) if you can do this, or would like to help out for a limited time.

**Dangar Island Vehicle Management Committee (DIVMC)**

## AN UNUSUAL NATIVE MAMMAL

There are relatively few species of native mammals on Dangar Island and two of the most conspicuous, the Brushtail and Ringtail Possums were probably introduced by Wynn Jones in the 1970's. Bats are the only other mammals to be regularly sighted.

So in early May I was particularly excited to spot a Native Water Rat (*Hydomys chrysogaster*) diving away from my torch beam in clear shallow water under the jetty. The mundane common name of this rodent belies its impressive size and colouration. It is up to two feet in length, snout to tip of tail, with dark brown body fur flecked gold and a black furry tail with a white tip like a Ringtail Possum. It has webbed feet and is sometimes called a Beaver Rat, though to my mind it is more like an Otter.

It is largely nocturnal though I have seen Water Rats commonly swimming around during the daytime in winter in the inland waterways. It is widely distributed in brackish and fresh waterways in Australia and New Guinea, and I've even seen it live - trapped (for fauna survey purposes) alongside a tiny rainforest stream on the Lamington Plateau. It could not possibly be mistaken for the introduced Black Rat *Rattus rattus* which is common on the island, especially in roof cavities over the colder months. The other local rodent, *Howardus bigotus* of the North Shore is an altogether more noxious creature than even the Black Rat.

Perhaps other foreshore residents could keep an eye open for this Water Rat to see whether this is just an isolated sighting or whether a resident population exists here. It is easy to overlook because it is nocturnal, aquatic and adept at diving when alarmed. When it dives it leaves a trail of bubbles from air trapped in the fur, so it's not hard to anticipate where it will come up.

**Ben Miller**

right: *Hydomys chrysogaster* (photo Jim Parke)

### REMEMBER...

**The Speed limit is 10 kph for all vehicles.**

Any vehicles accessing the Island must have a permit \$17 per day, or \$55 per week.

Private vehicles garaged here must be registered, and driven ONLY by a licensed driver with a current permit.



## DANGAR ISLAND LEAGUE INC

Recently we had, like many Islanders have over the years, a boat stolen from the Co-op Moorings. It occurred on a Friday night and the Police found the alleged thieves trying to return to their hired houseboat. The young men were intoxicated and had been harassing houseboat hirers in Refuge Bay and other places. Of course, we reported the theft to the Police and suggested that they increase patrols to limit these, apparently common, events. The Police suggested that they know that boats are stolen and cars broken into in Brooklyn, but very few people report these to the Police.

This failure to report makes us our own worst enemies. By not reporting we are making it appear that little crime occurs in Brooklyn and here when, unfortunately, the opposite is often true. The result is that when the Police are asked to increase patrols they say, quite correctly, that there is no need to do so because there is little criminal activity!

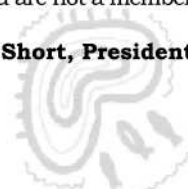
Please, if your car or boat is vandalised or stolen or you see suspicious activity in or around McKell Park or the Island, ring the Police and tell them and make a formal report. The Police will be happy to receive the information.

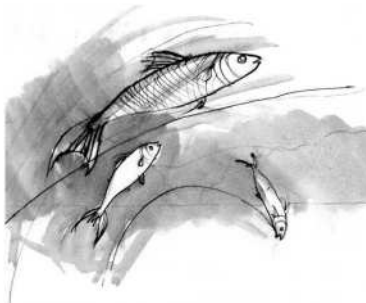
The River Settlements Review has been accepted by Council. From my reading Council has accepted the recommendation that short-term rentals and bed-and-breakfasts can be established on the Island, with development consent. What will this mean for us and the way we live? Will we be subject to noisy parties and drunken behaviour or the quiet murmurings of families enjoying a break? Will we be treated like exotic savages and photographed as we go about our daily lives or left in peace? Will the community links be strong enough to accept that some people have bought here to make money while others see the Island as a home place? It is the responsibility of all of us to participate in these discussions as they occur and to make our ideas known in regard to what is acceptable and what is not. How this community manages these will be the mark of us as humans.

The League 'scene' is very quiet at the moment: attendance is low at meetings and there seems to be little to raise the ire of Islanders. The AGM is not far away (September) and people need to begin thinking about their role in the League. I will not be standing again for president due to other commitments. It is only as strong as we make it. If you are not a member join. If you are a member, stand for a position.

**Dr Peter Short, President**

The League acknowledges the great contribution of Jenny Shanley as editor of the Mullet Mail since Issue #6 June 2001. Jenny gave the MM a superb design make-over and was always scrupulous and fair in her editorship. Her generous volunteer work will be hard to replace. Thank you Jenny.





## CRAFTY LADIES

Every Friday a group of Islanders meet to enthusiastically discuss their favourite topic - their latest craft projects. Most of our work is hand-done and techniques vary across the group depending upon specific interest. We crochet, knit, embroider and quilt and never in silence! Some of our ladies have recently knitted trauma teddies to donate to the Australian Red Cross. These teddies are then used by hospitals and ambulances to comfort children who are sick or injured. We have also participated in "Alluvium" and other exhibitions held locally in the Community Hall. We meet at 11am on Friday mornings, generally taking turns to host a gathering in our home. New members are always welcome. Ring Joan on 9985 7419 if you would like to join us.

Jenny Pakes

## POSITIONS VACANT ATTENTION MEN AND WOMEN

Do you have a dynamic, 'outgoing personality?  
Can you inspire confidence in those around you?  
Do you have the ability to communicate at all levels?  
Can people look to you for leadership?  
Do you dominate conversations with your erudite knowledge and incisive, logic?  
Can you keep your head in a crisis?  
Do you have drive, ambition, and a burning desire to succeed?  
Is your answer an emphatic YES to each of the above questions?  
Well, cocky little bastard, aren't you!

Bruce Lambert

## DI COMMUNITY CENTRE

Last night I went down to the Hall for my first Wu Tao ("Dancing the Elements") class with Helen Cooke. It was magic and will add to my store of memories of good times there: film nights with dress ups and cocktails; concerts to take your breath away (Lindsay Pollak is truly amazing); exhibitions of our own creativity, and our own history; parties for 8 year olds and 80 year olds (I can still see Phyllis Gilbert in a golden crown).

It may have strobe lights, a fog machine and killer sound system, now, but the Dangar Island Hall is still a simple and rather homely building. It is our communal space; we must remember to appreciate it and respect its humble requirements, whilst we enjoy what it provides us with. It does take some caring for, as anyone on the Hall committee can tell you. Latest news: a new water tank for the hall is scheduled to arrive on Tuesday 20th May 2008.

Current committee members.  
Wendy McMurdo President  
Judy Lattas Vice President  
Chabela Torres Treasurer  
Georgia Lynn-Robinson Secretary  
Hornsby Council representative  
Heather Dorrough  
Tess McCallum  
Wynn Webber  
Michele Rumsey Booking Officer  
To hire the Hall, phone 9985 8331.

Judy Lattas

## KNOW YOUR LOCAL FIRE BRIGADE

The Dangar Island Rural Fire Brigade held its Annual General Meeting on 5 April and the following members of the community were elected as its Executive Committee

Dr Peter Short Captain  
Russell Taylor Snr Deputy Captain  
Wally Bower President  
Georgia Lynn-Robinson Secretary  
Manfred Merl Treasurer

On Easter Saturday, the Brigade also held its annual fund raiser film night in the Community Hall, which was an extremely successful and enjoyable event. Thank you to all those members of the community who came along to support us.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that mooring or walking on the Fire Brigade pontoon beside the public wharf is an offence. Recently fuel and equipment was stolen from the fire boat. This is a potentially dangerous situation. Your Fire Brigade is here to protect persons and property on this Island and elsewhere on the river.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank all those hard working and dedicated members of the Fire Brigade who give so much of their effort and time to help make this community a wonderful place to live and visit.

Consider joining your Fire Brigade - it's a very rewarding experience. Meetings are held on the first Sunday of every month at 9.00 am in the Fire Shed and everyone is welcome.

Georgia Lynn-Robinson,  
Secretary

**Bushfire season has ended but house fire season has started. Please ensure your smoke detectors have fresh batteries and your fireplace flue is checked.**



**Sat 28<sup>th</sup> June 2008: Raintree County.** A sweeping American Civil War saga with a quality cast including Liz Taylor and Montgomery Clift.

Screens with one of Laurel and Hardy's very best, *County Hospital*.

**Sat 28<sup>th</sup> July 2008: An Evening with Mike Rubbo.** Local filmmaker with a fascinating CV introduces a selection of his documentaries and an intriguing "drama-mentary". [www.rubbo.com](http://www.rubbo.com)

**Sat 30<sup>th</sup> Aug 2008: An Evening with Nathan James.** Meet another local filmmaker who enchantingly captures the flora and fauna of the Hawkesbury area in his DVD series *Life In Our Backyard*.

[www.nathanjamesproductions.com](http://www.nathanjamesproductions.com)

For more info visit our website [www.difs.net](http://www.difs.net) You can join our mailing list, send us a message, download and share our latest Kids Workshop movie *Message On The Water*, and see our awesome poster archive.

**RED SHIELD APPEAL**  
24/25 May  
Annual doorknock appeal for the Salvation Army

## BLAST FROM THE PAST MURDER ON DANGAR?

The date was August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1929 and Dangar Island resident Henry "Harry" Jacobsen was in a good mood. He had just visited his wife Mary at the St. Kilda Maternity Hospital in Hornsby where both mother and his newborn daughter Romona were doing well. He was looking forward to bringing them both home the next day. His two other children, Thomas, aged four, and Rolf, aged one, were in his home at 24 Riverview Avenue, being looked after by his friend William Taylor. Taylor had worked with Harry in the Solomon Islands prior to the Jacobsens moving to Dangar in 1926, and was staying with Harry during his wife's confinement.

At around 6pm, Harry popped into Forbes' store in Brooklyn and bought some bacon and butter. The Store's owner, John Forbes, gave Harry some fish and had a quick chat about the new baby. Harry then told Forbes he was going home and walked towards Furlong's Boatshed where his launch was moored. He said g'day to Charles Wall, who was in the launch moored alongside his boat, and set off for Dangar. Charles heard the 'putt-putt' of Harry's boat across the water in the still night until it drifted from his hearing near the island.

### Harry and his boat were never seen again.

The following day, William Taylor went to the hospital and informed Mary that Harry hadn't returned. She rushed back to Dangar where police and residents mounted a huge search of the island. Police boats scoured the river and dragged the bottom between Brooklyn and Barrenjoey with no success. Dangar residents scoffed at the theory that Harry had somehow had an accident, fallen overboard and drowned, his launch drifted out to sea or sunk. The conditions were calm and Harry was an expert boat handler with a Masters ticket who had skippered yachts trading between islands in the Solomons.

Mary alleged, in a police statement "*from information received by her son Thomas*" Harry had "*eached his place of residence on Dangar Island and there met with foul play and that his launch was sunk with his body aboard of it in a very deep portion of the Hawkesbury River*".

Harry's friend William Taylor became the prime suspect, but with no body and a four year old's testimony worthless police had their hands tied. The Sydney newspapers featured the story and there was great public interest in the case. A year later, Mary left for the U.S., where she started a successful chain of hairdressing salons.

Years later Thomas would say "*Daddy's gone to the fishes*".

Nobody knows what happened to William Taylor but it's almost certain that he got away with murder.

*Footnote: Thanks to Harry Jacobsen's great-niece, Denise Clinton, who visited the island recently and provided invaluable information for this intriguing Dangar Island mystery.*

David Reynolds, President  
Dangar Island Historical Society

## DANGAR FERALS

As part of the Dangar Island fauna study we are interested to hear your input on sightings and impacts associated with feral and introduced animals on Dangar. We recognise that the introduction of non-native species presents a major risk to the conservation of the unique fauna of Dangar Island. We are looking to gather a record of the island's introduced pet and pest populations to understand better how they contribute to the maintenance and disturbance of the ecology of Dangar Island.

Please send feedback to  
[guy@tdaconsulting.com](mailto:guy@tdaconsulting.com)

The issues / input we are seeking:

Dogs
Do you own a dog? Is your dog de-sexed? Do you walk your dog on a leash? Do you think there should be a declared off-leash area on Dangar for dogs? Are there times of the day when your dog is left to roam, sniff, relive free on the island? Have you any records of dogs interacting with native animals?
Cats
Do you own a cat? Is your cat de-sexed? Does your cat remain indoors all day / only at night? What critters has your proud cat brought home to show you?
Rats
Do you have a rat problem in or around your house? Have you noticed an increase or decrease in rat numbers during you time on Dangar? What methods have you tried to remove or eradicate rats from around your house? Would you support a community rat control plan / strategy?

Would you support a natural succession plan for dogs and/or cats on the island (ie. no more new dogs or cats, but let current pets live out their remaining days)?

We appreciate that in Dangar's history the issue of domestic pets and pests and their control has been a sensitive issues. This is not a witch-hunt. As a new-ish Dangar resident and an owner of a boisterous young dog I am as responsible and as concerned as others in ensuring domestic animals and introduced pests can co-exist sustainably with the native fauna of Dangar Island. I am looking for your support and input in this endeavour.

Guy Williams

## DDDD 2008

### Men's Round The Island

1. Lt Cmdr Murray 17:07 2. Ebon Baxter 17:40 3. Pablo/Jonathan/Chabela 18:52 Line Honours; Steve Cameron (kayak) 16:20  
Youngest: Will Storch 18:59

### Women's Round The Island

1. Kathy Merrick 19:55 2. Sofan Chan 20:42 3. Jamie Turner 21:28  
Youngest: Marcela Torres 40:27

### Girls Sprints

1. Tilly Horman 2. Maddy Thornton 3. Delphi San Roque 4. Marcela Torres 5. Bronwyn Peddley & Ingrid Howell

### Boys Sprints

1. Lyndon Howell 2. Ewen Peddley

next issue  
Spring 2008