

Mullet Mail

NEWS & VIEWS OF DANGAR ISLAND RESIDENTS

89 Autumn 2026
dangarislandleague.com



The Dangar Life Photo Competition People's Choice is 'Waiting' by Alana Ward

*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.*

From the Editor

I'm privileged to do the work of Mullet Mail editor. "Think global and act local" is my motto. We pull the shiny threads of our community to create a seasonal tapestry of us.

Disturbing events are occurring in Palestine, Ukraine, Iran. It's strange to carry on with our peaceful lives.

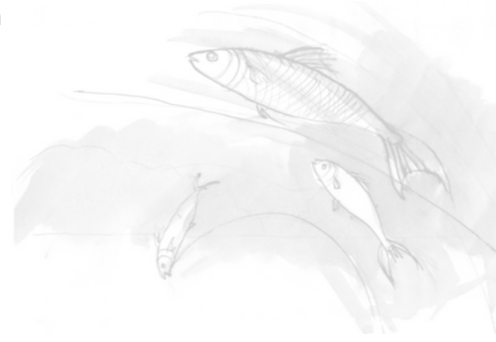
Meanwhile this beautiful community continues to be the

most extraordinary place to live on the planet.

With the 10th Dangardigras, reclaiming our hall, community music and creativity, birthdays, weddings, funerals, and opal card ticketing on the ferry, there is too much for one Mullet Mail.

We are so very lucky!

Cybele Shorter



AUTUMN REPORT

TERRY STEWART, PRESIDENT, DIL

2026 has barely started, and already it feels like we've packed in a lot. The League has set priorities, welcomed a visit from the Mayor and Councillors,

progressed lingering issues from last year, and enjoyed a hall fundraising auction that was successful and genuinely fun.

Which brings me to our Island venues.

In an entirely unofficial — and largely self-inflicted — role as an Island Complaints Officer, I often hear opinions about our venues. Some are thoughtful. Some are passionate. Some are... emphatic. Given the energy and commentary these places generate, it feels timely to focus this update on them.

One of the first things that struck Tim and I when we first stepped onto the island was that we had three community venues. For a small community, that signalled vitality and connection.

It took longer to understand the complexity. The hall was often closed, opened mainly for meetings or occasional events. The Dangar Island Bowling Club sometimes teetered on the brink, relying on grants and community generosity to stay afloat. The Depot, too, I'm told has had its challenges in the past.

That surprised me, because these venues aren't decorative extras; they are part of the Island's social spine. Lose one — let alone more — and something fundamental would change. Not everyone agrees, of course. Debates about how they should operate, what they should prioritise, what they should avoid, are often spirited. But perhaps that intensity is proof of their importance.

Each venue plays a distinct and complementary role.

The Depot is a small business providing local employment and essential services. The hall is a Council-owned facility that the League is working to make accessible to all residents. The Bowlo is a Council-owned facility and a membership-based club with paid staff and overheads to support.

Each venue has its own character. And for the first time in many years, all simultaneously appear to be in reasonable shape and progressing.

As a customer, I see the Depot as a gloriously quirky café in one of the best locations imaginable. It's where I

take visitors with quiet pride — to admire the sweep of the water, the little post boxes, the ferry gliding in while we sit in the sunshine with coffee in hand. That simple scene captures something essential about island life.

The hall is where groups converge. Thanks to a determined band of volunteers, it is beginning to hum again. Music groups are rehearsing, craft groups are crafting, the bridge group is bridging, and the Warblers are warbling. The doors are open. The lights are on.

Then there is the Bowlo. It is increasingly recognised beyond the island as a uniquely beautiful green, and distinctive venue. It is on track to deliver financial sustainability without grants and donations for a second consecutive year — no small achievement. That stability rests on thousands of volunteer hours, the support of members, and income from summer visitors.

Are any of these venues perfect? Of course not. There is always room to refine, improve and adapt. But together, they are remarkable.

Where else in a community this size can you start your day with breakfast by the water, drift into the hall for yoga, and finish with pizza and a drink at the Bowlo as the sun sets? That rhythm — casual, connected, distinctly ours — is not accidental. It exists because people care enough to volunteer, organise, and show up.

We are fortunate, but I know that the viability of our venues is finely balanced. Just one adverse event or incident, or apathy, can jeopardise their survival.

So let's support them — all of them. Use them. Defend them. Improve them. Because if they were to close, the Island would still be beautiful, but it would be less vibrant and less connected — and a poorer community for it.



Terry Stewart and Georgia Lynn-Robinson at the auction. | Photo: Bill Lynn-Robinson

PROPOSAL

LISA BATEMAN, EXECUTIVE DIL

The League's Executive Committee is considering options for a potential name change for the organisation

The current name often requires clarification of the organisation's role as a community association. When communicating with government authorities, service providers, or other stakeholders, the name should immediately identify the organisation. Time spent explaining "who we are" is time not spent advocating for the community.

For example, a letter sent by the League to the NSW Local Government Minister was mistakenly forwarded to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, where it

remained unattended. Follow-up action required resending the letter—wasting valuable time, energy, and effort.

Choosing a name for a community organisation is more than a branding exercise—it is a strategic decision that shapes how the group is recognised and understood. A name should reflect the organisation's purpose, represent its residents, and clearly signal its geographic and community focus.

We welcome discussion on the proposed name change at the **League's next general meeting on Sunday 19 April**. At the meeting we will provide an update on options and process if a name change is agreed.

Any agreed name change would then be put to a vote at the League's Winter general meeting.

HALL YEAH!

PETER GODBOLT, HALL SUBCOMMITTEE, DIL

It's been a massive few months for the Dangar Island Community Hall, and the heartbeat of our island is as strong as ever. Whether you're coming down for a singalong, looking to get involved behind the scenes, or just wanting to know what's on, here is a quick wrap-up of the latest goings-on from the hall subcommittee.

Record-breaking Lovers Eve first and foremost, a massive thank you to everyone who made the **Lovers Eve Fundraiser** such a phenomenal success. The community truly dug deep, raising an incredible **\$21,728**. Every cent of this is strictly reserved for supporting and maintaining the hall, ensuring it remains a top-tier asset for all of us.

What's on at the hall? The space is bustling with regular activities, and we are always looking for new ways to activate the hall. If you haven't popped in recently, here's a taste of what's currently keeping the doors open:

Warblers: Bring your vocal cords and join the local choir - Monday evenings

Yoga: Find your zen right here on the island, Monday and Friday mornings with Anna, Tuesday mornings with Summer

Bridge: Sharpen your mind and enjoy some friendly competition whilst learning the game - Wednesday evenings

Table Tennis: Ping and Pong with friends from 2pm on Thursdays

If Not Me, Who Else? (INMWE): On Thursday evenings before Yellow Bin, join a group for both philosophical discussion, and willingness to put some ideas into action for the benefit of the island - things like shared internet / emission free power and more.

Dangar Cinémathèque: On Thursday evenings before Green bin, Deerubbin Island Film Society roars back into life with free screenings of Islander chosen and introduced movies



Auctioneer Jodi Theissen did a fantastic job on the night encouraging big dollars for our hall. Photo Bill Lynn-Robinson

Kids Music: Friday arvo at the hall is the perfect spot for the talented youth of the island to make some joyful noise.

Behind the Scenes: Keeping the hall humming, the Dangar Island League Hall Subcommittee has been putting in the hard yards to make sure the venue runs smoothly, safely, and transparently. Recent updates include a freshly polished Terms of Reference, which outlines clear procedures and financial limits to keep community funds totally above board.

Have an idea? We want to help make it happen! - come along to any Hall meeting - upcoming ones are posted on the noticeboard at the hall, so keep an eye!

Roll out the green bin, then roll out the red carpet!

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY PETER GODBOLT & JONATHON SYKES FOR DIFS

If you've noticed a cheerful bunch of locals migrating toward the hall on alternate Thursdays, you've stumbled upon our island's best-kept cinematic secret. After a roaringly successful "Season 0," we are officially gearing up for Seasons 1, 2, and 3 in 2026, and we'd absolutely love for you to join the club.

The Plot: We meet every second Thursday—specifically on "Green Bin" week. But here's the twist: the movies are entirely curated by the community. Each fortnight, a local resident selects a film that genuinely means something to them. They give us a quick intro, we all sit back and watch it together, and then we have a yarn about it afterwards before doing it all again two weeks later.

Fine Print (Don't worry, it's good news!): To keep the movie-licensing gods happy, these are private film society screenings, rather than a public cinema event. But the good news is that membership is free to DI League members! Otherwise join DIFS on the night of any 2026 screening.

We Need You and Your Favourite Flicks!

Directors (Film Nominators): We need locals to step forward and nominate a movie for our upcoming 2026 seasons. If you've got a flick that changed your life, made you cry laughing, or just has a killer soundtrack, we want to watch it with you! Send an email with your name and your film choice, and we'll curate as best we can and get you on the schedule. Good choices can be blockbusters, obscure arthouse, home made sci-fi or anything in between. If you're prepared to stand up and say why you picked it, we want to hear about it!

Tech Crew: More interested in cables than cameras? If you're keen to learn about multimedia setups, surround sound, and the technical



Community Hall Saturday 4th April from 6pm DIFS presents...

A Dangar Rural Fire Brigade Fundraiser

w' curries, mulled wine, cake stall and fresh popcorn

wizardry that makes movie magic happen, come along! We'd love to show you how it all works.

Box Office Details: @ the Hall - every "Green Bin" Thursday. 7 pm to set up and hang out, and movie rolls at 8 pm.

Vibe: Great fun, super casual, and heavily snack-oriented. BYO drinks and pizza!

Get Involved: Just pop by the hall on a green bin Thursday

evening, or shoot an email to Peter (petergodbolt@gmail.com) or Jonathan (info@difs.net) to find out more, or to bags a spot for your film.

See you at Cinéma-thèque!



<<<<<<<<<<
Check out DIFS
upcoming screenings
<<<<<<<<<<

AUTUMN 2026

JOSH GINTY, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, DIRFB

Dangar brigade is called out multiple times a year in response to fallen trees on the island that have impacted roadways, property, and powerlines, with 2026 being no exception.

Trees can drop limbs for several reasons: heat or water stress ("summer limb drop"); rain or humidity making limbs heavier; internal decay; termite damage, fungal disease, or; age-related brittleness.

But don't lay in bed worrying. Detailed analysis available via this QR code >>> shows that you are 450 times more likely to be injured falling out of bed than by a falling tree.



As is the case with all emergency situations it's good to think ahead so that you can make informed judgements.

Key considerations in relation to fallen trees are:

- At all times be on the lookout for fallen powerlines.
- Never approach fallen powerlines - **always stay at least 8 metres away** and call 000 as soon as safe to do so.
- If the incident is potentially life-threatening, call 000 as soon as safe to do so.
- If the tree has impacted on a property, evacuate everyone from the house as soon as it's safe to do so.

In the event of a property or public space being impacted by a fallen tree with no immediate risk to residents or the public, call the SES on 132 500.

000 and SES calls will be routed through the RFS to the Dangar Brigade for assessment, and co-ordination of further emergency response. Additional useful numbers are below.

Hornsby Shire Council's Customer Service team on 9847 6666 who can lodge assessment requests for trees on council land.

Ausgrid's hazard line 13 13 88 can be used for non-urgent matters relating to trees and power supply risk.



Dangar Fire Brigade prepare to clear fallen branches on Riverview Avenue. | Photo Rochman Reese

*** MOVIE MAGIC ***

Please save the date for Easter Saturday the 4th of April. The Dangar Rural Fire Brigade Film Night will see the screening of Magic Beach in the Community Hall from 6pm with the support of the Dangar Island Film Society. Come along and enjoy a fiery curry, our legendary cake stall, and bags of fresh pop-corn! (see poster on opposite page)



Dangar Island Fire Brigade turned their fire truck into a giant shark tank for Dangardigras 2026 - Aqueerium
Photo: Bill Lynn-Robinson

Extolling the virtues of *Indigofera australis*

BEN MARTIN

When it comes to native plants, there are a plethora of alluring options available. Nursery breeders have honed their art, creating plants with bold colouring, vigorous growth habits and adaptability to most garden settings. These plants, such as the somewhat monstrous *Grevillea Mason's* hybrids (available at a Bunnings or Flower Power near you), have a place in our gardens when filling space or creating eye catching centerpieces. But what about more common native plants that you won't find in Bunnings or Flower Power, but which deserve much wider recognition and status within our gardens? *Indigofera australis* is one such plant. I have a love affair with this plant. It is, dare I say it, my favourite ... for now.



Indigofera australis | Photo: Fagg, M 2008 Australian National Botanic Gardens <http://www.anbg.gov.au/photo>.

Extolling the virtues of this plant is easy and must start with its foliage, which stays luscious and fresh all year long. Glaucous, feathery, and borne on delicate stems, it catches even the slightest breeze, adding movement and texture to the garden. Looking best when planted en masse in drifts, it makes a beautiful backdrop to a mixed border that adds depth and vitality. Then come the flowers. Magenta pink clusters of Sweet Pea-like flowers cover the entire shrub from late winter to early spring, a beacon of colour. It is

floriferous in every sense of the word and is beloved by a whole host of insects including bees and butterflies. Whilst its flowering period is short, it is so sweet that it is well worth the wait.

A woody shrub, growing up to three meters in height and the same in width, it is a member of the Fabaceae family, with its defining characteristics being its seed-producing pods — just the same as the common garden pea. Like all plants in its family, it is a nitrogen fixer, meaning its roots produce nodules which fix nitrogen into the soil, increasing the soil's fertility — making it an excellent choice for new garden beds. It will happily grow in clay, sand and loamy soils, provided it has good drainage, and tolerates full sun to dappled shade.

The literature may tell this plant is short-lived, giving it a paltry 2-3 years, with some even suggesting it be treated as an annual — what a waste! When, with the right care and pruning, it could live anything from 10-20 years. Pruning back by a half or two thirds after flowering in late winter or early spring will ensure the plant stays bushy and compact — you can also tip prune through the summer months. This is a plant that naturally grows in poor rocky soils. However! In your garden setting (and this goes for a bush block garden or a city terrace) I would always recommend improving the soil with good compost, feeding with a multipurpose feed once a year, and mulching around the base with either wood chips or garden compost. It is not phosphorus sensitive and will very much appreciate the extra love.

The final cherry on the cake is that *Indigofera australis* is exceptionally easy to propagate. The easiest method is to grow from seed. You'll know the pods are ready when they turn a deep brown and the casing becomes rigid. Remove the seeds and place in a small bowl. Then, and don't be shy about this, pour boiling water over them and leave until the water has cooled. This helps to break the hard outer casing of the seed, vastly improving germination rates. Sow them in pots, in a free draining seed compost, cover lightly, water well, and place them somewhere that gets bright, indirect light. Keep damp — but not waterlogged — and germination should happen within 10-14 days. Plant them out into the garden when you start to see roots peering through the bottom of the pot, or when the plant has at least 3 sets of strong leaves.

Plants are available to buy at native plant nurseries. I highly recommend Harvest Seeds and Native Plants (Terry Hills), and Indigigrow (La Perouse). Both nurseries stock a wide range of plants and are well worth a visit.

Happy growing!



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Harvest Seeds



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Indigrow

Scribbly Calligraphy

ANA POLLAK

Every year with flare and ease,
little bush artists draw on our trees.

It starts with the Scribbly Gum Moth (*Ogmograptis* spp.) laying its eggs in autumn under the bark of the island's blackbutt trees (*Eucalyptus pilularis*). Over winter the moth's eggs hatch into caterpillars, which eat a random line into living tissue of the tree. When the young caterpillars moult, their drawing style changes into zig zags. Some species of Scribbly Gum Moth eat alongside their first zigzag and some back track over it. All this eating triggers the tree to produce a nutritious scar tissue. Then when the larva chucks a U-ey and back tracks along the same route, it can feast on this extra nutritious tissue for its final growth spurt.

As summer comes, the larvae make their cocoons around the base of the tree, or in the leaf litter. This is when the trees shed their older bark to reveal the beautiful new Scribbly Gum Moth calligraphy beneath.



Scribbly calligraphy on *Eucalyptus pilularis*.
Photo Ana Pollak

Join the Mullet Mail team.

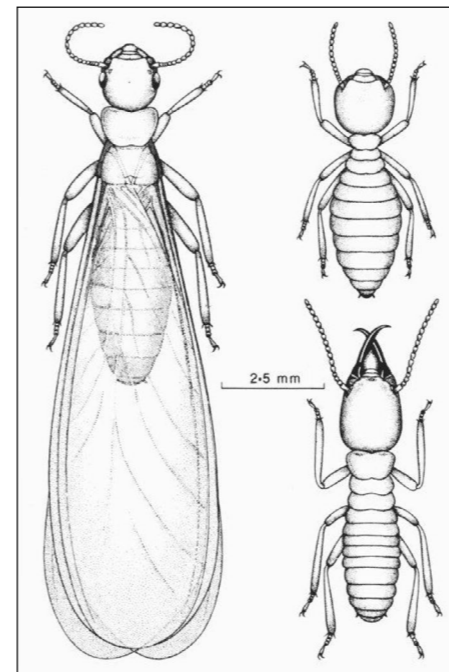
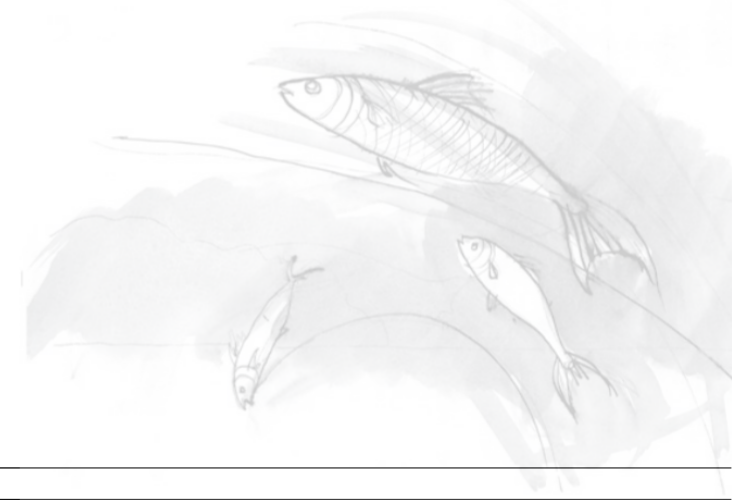
We are looking for content creators (writers or collectors) who are interested in growing our community building network.

Young people and new residents are welcome, as well as our salty stalwarts of the community.

Quarterly editions allow plenty of time to gather, write, create your work before deadline.

Most of our communication is through online chat, but meetings with beer and pizza not unlikely.

Chat with one of the team to find out more.



TRAPS FOR WHITE ANTS

BILL LYNN-ROBINSON

We found a very successful way of treating and preventing white ants. It involves the use of an anti-termite kit made by a Qld company called Termikill. You position a number of traps around the outside of the house (I have 24). Those traps have an open bottom and are filled with termite delicious wood. If any termites are present in the area they go for the wood in the trap. If termites enter the trap they are easy to spot, as the worker termites block a small hole on the top of the trap, which is an indicator that they are present.

All that has to be done is open the hole at the top of the trap by poking in your finger or a stick and place a supplied bait pack (Active ingredient Chlorfluazuron) on top of the trap. The worker ants then burrow into the bait and take it back to the nest. One or 2 packs has been enough to kill the whole nest.

Check out - <https://termikill.com.au/>

Illustration of winged reproductive termite, a worker and a soldier of the same species.

Photo credit www.csiro.au/



AMIE WEE, CFR

I'll never forget my first dinner party on the island.

Somewhere between dinner and dessert, the conversation took a sharp turn - and suddenly the locals were swapping stories of their island-induced injuries like they were funny holiday memories. There were broken bones from steep staircases, twisted ankles courtesy of loose rocks, hips sacrificed to rogue shrubs, and at least one late-night shortcut that ended in a cracked rib or two. It felt like an unofficial induction ceremony: Welcome to island life - mind your step!

As a newcomer, I laughed along — but I also found myself wondering: what actually happens when someone needs medical assistance on the island? When I learned about Community First Responders (CFR), it made sense for me to join. I work from home and am on the island most days, and I realised I didn't want to feel helpless if something serious happened. I wanted to be able to help.

In 2025, I began training with New South Wales Ambulance and graduated later that year. With no health background, it was daunting at first. But I quickly learned that you don't need to know everything — you just need to be willing to learn and show up.



CFR training | Photo: NSW Ambulance



Aimee Wee Training for CFR with the helicopter
Photo: NSW Ambulance

The training was intense at times, but incredibly worthwhile. I gained practical skills, completed a number of ambulance ride-alongs on the Central Coast, and learned how to stay calm and work as part of a team in challenging situations. Most of all, it's given me a new sense of confidence — not just in my abilities, but in my capacity to step up when it matters.

Living on an island means help isn't always immediately around the corner. The more trained responders we have locally, the stronger and safer our island community becomes.

If you've ever considered becoming a Community First Responder, consider this your sign! Even completing a basic first aid and CPR course can make a difference.

For more information email dangarcfr33@gmail.com or phone Liz Nolf on 0402 290 200. I'm also always happy to have a chat and share my experience — you can reach me on 0415 351 350.



CFR transport dressed up for Dangardigras 2026
Photo: Bill Lynn-Robinson

Hi Islanders,

JUDE PRICHARD

If you have an experience of cancer, you will know what a disruptor it is. Days preoccupied with appointments and recovery, and any sense of 'normal', and predictability out the door. It can also have a large financial burden, particularly for families, and the creation and sharing of good memories through holidays, can seem impossible.

After supporting a friend with cancer, I was researching ways I could share our beautiful river with families on a similar journey. I found 'gifting holiday stays' through the Otis Foundation. They have been doing exactly that for nearly 25 years. It is the only entity of its kind in Australia, and offers donated holiday stays to people who are

managing, or have managed breast cancer. That's one in seven women. Men are also not immune.

If you have an island home, a weekender or an Airbnb, Otis would be very happy to negotiate use of it for those people needing emotional respite, or recovery from their cancer journey. They would need from you a commitment of a minimum of four stays a year - negotiated for a time that suits you (midweek, 3 nights/4 days is popular) - or a single block of time when you are away for annual holidays.

Otis have the experience to offer guest management, post occupancy cleaning and Gift In Kind tax deductible receipts.

If we can coordinate ourselves as a River: Bar Point, Wobby, Dangar, Mooney, Brooklyn and beyond, we may even form our own unique and inspiring identity as a compassionate community.

If you are interested in this concept and would like to know more, let's get together and talk with Otis CEO Claire Culley, or look up www.otisfoundation.org.au.

Cheers Jude - 0497038210

Otis Foundation
>>>>>>>



Footprints by Jann French



AT THE BOWLO

STEVE GRIFFITHS

It's been a busy Summer at the Club, with locals and visitors alike enjoying our events, Sharon's great food and barefoot bowls. We have been trialling longer opening hours through the Summer, started a weekly Member's Happy Hour on Saturdays (5pm - 6pm) and introduced some fabulous new drinks and Salumi platters for our Saturday Sundowners.

With the excitement of another spectacular Dangardigras now behind us, we aim to maintain the momentum through Autumn and into Winter with the return of Ruth Cullen's curated movie screenings, The Cullen Collection, and Trivia with The Viking to complement our schedule of top quality concerts.

We'd also like to formally thank Wally Bower for all of the energy he devotes to the Club — and his fundraising prowess! He is always a massive help on show days and we're now on the road to raising the funds we need to cover and resurface our outdoor stage area. Thanks Wally!

Check out what's coming up below and scan the QR code or go to www.dangarislandbowlingclub.com/events for more info and tickets.



Mick Thomas - 19th April



Elle Hooper - 3rd May



The Catholics - 24th May

APRIL

- Sun 5 – Easter Island Band
- 7pm Sat 18 – Big River All Stars
- Sun 19 – Mick Thomas (ex Weddings Parties Anything)
- Sun 26 – Royal River Rats

MAY

- Sun 3 May – Ella Hooper
- Sat 9 May – The Cullen Collection: Searching For Sugarman
- Sat 16 May – Trivia with The Viking
- Sun 24 May – The Catholics

JUNE

- Friday - Sunday 5, 6 and 7 June – Winter Cabaret (see opposite page)

Events & Tickets



Bowlo Memberships



Cabaret Call Out!

PETER GODBOLT

The Dangar Island Winter Cabaret is officially back, and we are calling all islanders to help make this year's show our best one yet!

Following last year's massive success, which saw 3 sell out shows, and an incredible 48 people working together to make the magic happen, we are returning to the stage with a brand-new theme.

We are going to be running it slightly differently this year with, perhaps, a little more tightly orchestrated production. But one thing is absolutely certain: you won't want to miss it.

Get Involved!

The only prerequisite for joining in? You just have to want to be involved. You do not need to be an expert—in fact, you don't even need to be competent! Pure enthusiasm is all it takes. The shows run late, so nearly teens to nearly centurions are a good fit.

Whether you want to be in the spotlight or pull the strings behind the scenes, we are looking for willing participants to jump into...

Cast & Choir: Singing, acting, and bringing the mystery to life.

Band: Providing the moody, jazz-filled soundtrack.

Crew & Tech: Lighting, sound, and stage management.

Specialty Roles: Magic, puppet operating, or even... industrial machine operation! (Or all of the above, if you're feeling ambitious.)

The Details

Rehearsals & Meetings: We will be gathering and practicing at the Hall, probably on a series of Friday evenings.

Performances: JUNE 5TH, 6TH, AND 7TH AT THE CLUB. Keep an eye out - these will probably be sell-out shows!

Stay in the Loop

There is already plenty of buzzing chat happening in our dedicated Winter Cabaret WhatsApp group. If you'd like to join the conversation, you can ask any islander you think might be involved to add you to the chat.

Got brilliant ideas, or ready to sign up right now? Email me at petergodbolt@gmail.com. I will happily add you to the WhatsApp group and make sure you are kept in the loop with all the latest updates.

Above: Sirens at 2025 Winter Cabaret | Photo: Louise Cankett

Dive for DIVA

OLLIE BOWN

Irregular volleyball games on Bradley's Beach Dangar Island. Generally on Sundays. The tide needs to be below 0.8m for there to be enough beach to set up the net and court area. All welcome.



DIVAs on the south beach, playing mixed age teams 2026. Photo Alana George.

Affectionately becoming known as DIVAs. There's been plenty of great volleys since it started last year. Age minimum 10 years. Teams and games divided by age at times, but not always.

On the 1st of March Ollie said "Exceptional game of youngs v olds. Olds took a 10 point lead but had to have an afternoon nap. Youngs came through to win 21-18."

Feel free to propose a session.

For more information and to be added to the group chat contact Ollie - +61 431 084 331

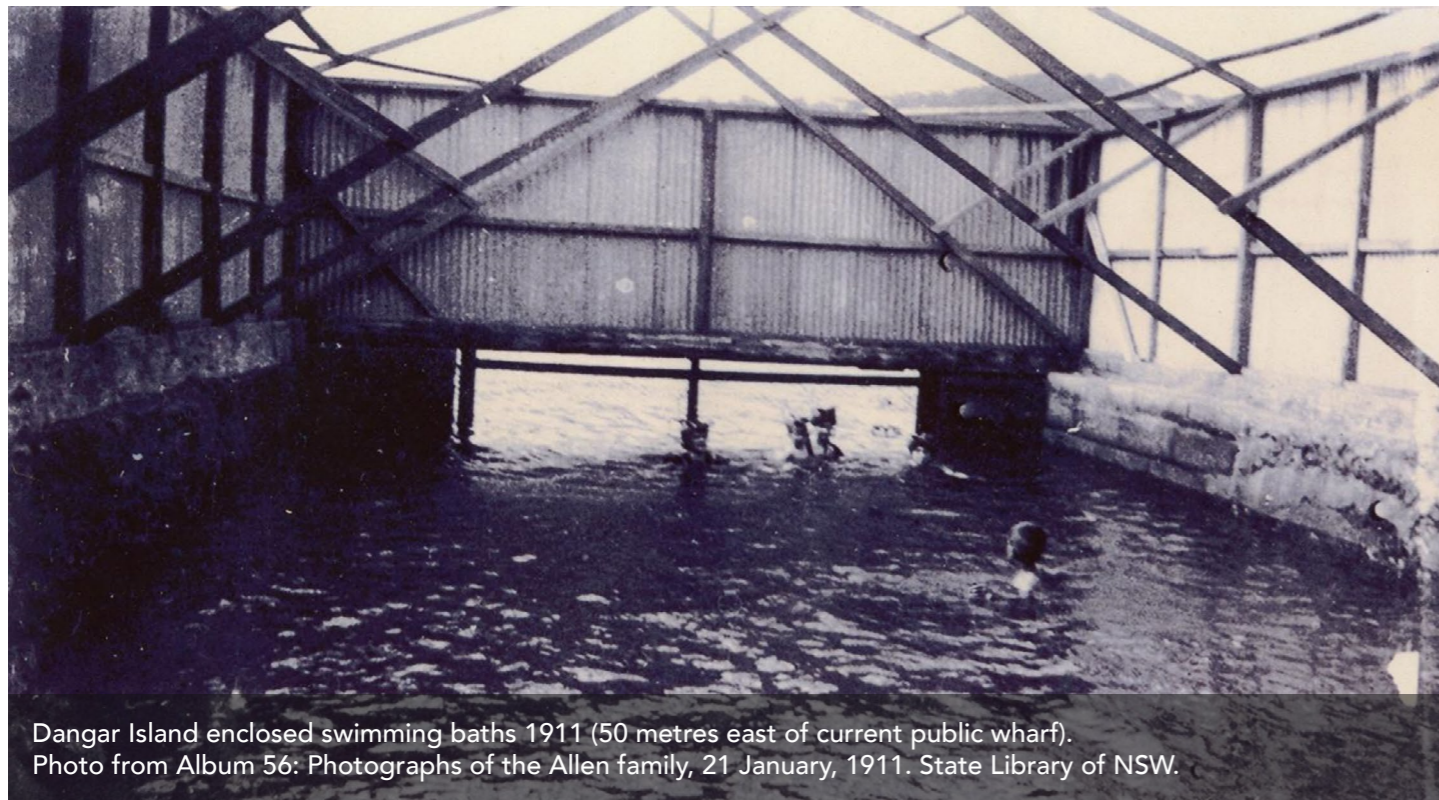
Memories of a fifteen-year-old

ROSE CURTIS, DIHS

Dangar Island 1918

This random mention comes from Sydney woman Helen Rutledge. Helen included a brief mention of the island in her memoir about growing up in Bellevue Hill from 1903.

verandahs on each side with shower rooms at the end of them. We each had a cabin to ourselves, though they were connecting. The boys were on one side and the girls on the other, and we could read or talk or play games and only went to the main house for meals.



Dangar Island enclosed swimming baths 1911 (50 metres east of current public wharf). Photo from Album 56: Photographs of the Allen family, 21 January, 1911. State Library of NSW.

Helen's first holiday away from home without a grown-up guardian was to Dangar Island when she was fifteen. She and her brother Alastair went by train to Hawkesbury River Station where they were met by Neville Dangar and his daughter Betty in his motorboat. These were the last years the island was owned by one family.

When the first purchaser of the island Henry Carey Dangar died in 1917, his second son, [Reginald] Neville Dangar inherited the island. He sold it four years later, in February 1921 to solicitors/developers Crouch and Thom. It was subdivided and blocks auctioned from October 1921.

Helen writes:

The island was the most delightful of adventures. At this time [1918], it was Mr Dangar's property and the only buildings on it were his house and boatshed and swimming bath. Alas, it is now built over.

Dangar had everything necessary for an exciting island: a little mountain with climbable rocks round it, a little spit with a beach on either side, and the nearest shore was undeveloped bush.

The house was unusual. It had a central block where Mr and Mrs Dangar had their rooms, sitting-room and dining-room. There were long wings on either side. The boatman or caretaker lived in one and the other consisted of a double row of cabins opening on to

The swimming bath, where we girls swam without our heavy woollen bathers, was roofed and enclosed, Mr Dangar used to take us on his boat out to swim at Refuge Bay, surely the prettiest cove in the river, with sheer cliffs and bush round it and the clearest of clear water over a sandy bottom. It was like swimming in melted glass the water was so translucent.

We used to go out rowing, too, and explore creeks and have picnics. Once we were caught in a southerly buster on the way home. The boys and Betty had a hard row home, with Barbara Laidley and me hanging on to the rudder to keep the dinghy head to wind. Mr Dangar bawled out instructions through a loud hailer from the jetty. Betty was a big strong girl, Alastair and John Laidley were lightweights. John had been cox in one or more of Sydney Grammar School's winning eights and none of us was unduly alarmed, though Mr Dangar was worried enough to be cross with us when we got back safely. Mr Dangar was an intrepid sailor himself and accompanied Sir Alexander MacCormick on his yacht Ada when he sailed her from Falmouth to Australia via the Panama Canal in 1927.

I went to the island for two or three summers and never enjoyed anything more. It is hardly necessary to say that these remembered halcyon days were always fine.

Source: Helen Rutledge, *My Grandfather's House*, Doubleday 1986. pp141-142.

FLAGGING INTEREST

DAVE REYNOLDS

You've all seen it flying from flagpoles, both at houses and on boats, hanging on walls all over the island. The unofficial Dangar Island flag, representing our historic past.

Instantly recognisable in the top left corner is the tower, a nod to Henry Carey Dangar, who bought the island in 1864. And behind the tower is a white mullet, acknowledging the time Arthur Phillip named his resting place Mullet Island in May 1788, and which remained the island's name for 188 years, until 1976 when Dangar Island became our official name. Four red stars represent the Southern Cross, and all of this against the black and white St Piran's Cross, the flag of Cornwall.

Obviously Cornwall because Henry Carey Dangar was born in... Port Stephens!

Yes, Henry Carey was a true blue first generation Aussie, born in Port Stephens in 1830 and died in his Potts Point mansion Grantham in 1917. Wait up, so what is the Cornish link to our beautiful island? The white symbolising tin, and the black representing rock/ore, dating back to 19th-century traditions of local Cornish mining heritage. What the hell has that got to do with us? Well, the link is tenuous to say the least.

Let's start by researching how our flag came into being, and I must stress that this is by no means a criticism of the Dangar Island Historical Society or any of its members that preceded my arrival here in 1995. Established in 1981 by a group of island history devotees, in particular Pat Wallace, the DIHS became active when resident John Heslop joined the committee in 1988, becoming President in 1989. John had two items he poured his energy into. The first was the writing of the Historic Guide, which was first published in 1992, and the second was the creation of an island flag. For the design of the flag Heslop consulted with John Vaughan OAM, widely considered to be Australia's leading authority on the design, etiquette, protocol and history of flags.

Recently, I spoke with John Vaughan, now a sprightly 82 and as sharp as a tack, and he vividly remembers designing the flag. He even had his original notes, and amongst those is the line "Henry Dangar - Cornish heritage". Now this is where it gets murky because there were two Henry Dangars. Henry Dangar senior was born in St Neots, Cornwall and arrived in Australia aged 23, where he soon became Assistant Surveyor- General to John Oxley. This is the Henry Dangar darkly associated with the Myall Creek Massacre, the Henry who allegedly bribed jury members, the Henry who was dismissed as Assistant Surveyor- General for misappropriation of lands. Not really the Henry we want to be associated with.

So we had historians and a flag designer believing Cornwall born Henry first purchased the island. And you must also recall that in the 1980s and 90s elderly people especially held on to their love of Mother England. In fact many of them were committed Anglophiles. Long term residents will remember the 3 framed boards from the DIHS hanging in the Bowlo as testament to our history. Each board held 6-8 photos, all of them bar one if I remember correctly were photos of the Dangar family. Not just H.C. and his family but Henry senior and his siblings. There was one photo of the Dangar house amongst this obsession with the extended Dangar family. Dangar Island even became an unofficial 'sister town' with St Neot in Cornwall.



2014 Dangar Island Flag with L-R: NSW Senator Deborah O'Neill, Dave Reynolds, NSW Member for Hornsby Matthew Kean, Governor of NSW Marie Bashir, Peter Wolf, Mayor of Hornsby Shire Council Steve Russel | Photo: HSC

Henry's second eldest son was also named Henry - Henry Carey Dangar, and he was known widely as 'H.C.' Dangar to avoid confusion with his father. It was this avid sailor who loved the Lower Hawkesbury and bought this island in 1864. However, there was a 'conditional purchase' of Mullet Island recorded in 1863 to Henry Dangar. When I first arrived here I was told unreservedly that it was the elder Henry who first purchased the island, with his son taking over the following year. This fact was backed up in several published books of the time. However we know this 'fact' to be totally untrue. How do we know this? Well, Henry Dangar died in 1861!! There is no evidence at all that Henry senior ever visited the island while he was alive either.

So that's the Cornwall link. The father of the first white person to own the island was born there. Does that truly represent our heritage? I personally don't believe it does. Having said that, I love the look of our flag! And it's not official, just a fun community flag. But I think the question should be asked... should we consider redesigning it? We have a stable of hugely talented artists and designers resident here. If the community supported the idea we could hold a design competition. I'd love to hear the community feedback on this subject. Flag me down!

Please note, This article is the personal view of the author and not that of the DIHS as a whole.

Then and Now

Marina Garvey

Then.

1977. It is a humid summer. A taxi unloads me and my blue backpack onto a footpath, outside a pawn shop at the Haymarket end of George St. I stand there for some moments, breathing in the foreignness of this place. An aging thread of Victorian shopfront façades and low-rise commercial buildings weave their way up to Town Hall – a post office, an army disposal store, a bank, an Italian travel agency, at least two churches, an insurance office, a kung fu academy, a pizza shop, take-away food outlets, and a parade of discount stores advertising cheap electrical goods and souvenirs. All the while there is the hustle of people and traffic. As yet I have no fixed destination but that does not bother me. I am young which is to say I am both foolish and fearless. Just as I am about to pick up my backpack and start the walk towards Circular Quay and the Opera House, which has suddenly settled in my mind as something to see, my attention is caught by a man leaning into a large garbage bin. His hair falls in long greasy matted lengths. The suit he's wearing is torn and heavily stained. He is bare-footed. I am mesmerised by his feet, festering and thickly calloused like parched earth, cracking open. His toenails, the colour of nicotine, have become long curling talons. It is impossible to say how old he is. Slowly, he picks his way through the bin, oblivious to all that is happening around him. At this very moment he is framed by a sleek silver Mercedes gliding by. The image of man and car joined becomes a jpeg in my mind. Before this I had never seen a homeless person or a Mercedes. It is a collision of worlds that is both shocking and tantalising.

Now.

2026. But now, now I have seen far too many who are homeless and enough gleaming cars to fill several lifetimes. Increasingly, Then and Now live uneasily in my mind like a marriage that is fracturing.



Veranda Jam Friday 13th March 2026, music session at the Bowlo. | Photo: Cybele Shorter

Veranda Jam

Cybele Shorter

Friday Nights - 7pm @ Bowlo - (except on Open Mic Night)

"Did you know humans are animals? But we just make more noises" overheard at the club.

Liz Nolf, Philip Doggett & myself, started informal music sessions at the Bowlo.

"This is not a performance" is our motto.

Bring songs - bring instruments - give it a try, don't be shy!

The Heart is a Needle

MARINA GARVEY

I remember my mother hunching over the old Bernina
threading its needle

and then
the furious clack clacking of the machine
scoffing swathes of fabric

I remember her foot hard on the peddle and
a cigarette waiting in the ashtray close by
burning.

I remember

her darning and mending and pinning and patching and knitting
bending the world as she saw it
to her will.

I remember that she once worked with a tailor who was Dutch and drove an old Jag.

I remember blue coat fabric

In pieces

It felt scratchy

My father who was also Dutch didn't like the tailor

I remember the air at that time

bristling

and then he was gone, the tailor I mean.

I remember her often saying 'we must look our best'.

I remember others saying to me 'you are so beautifully turned out'
referring to an outfit my mother had sewn.

I remember feeling the heart as a needle, feeling the truth of it.



DANGAR ISLAND DEPOT

Exhibition line-up

Genevieve Ginty - Until 12th April

Janine Campbell - 14th April - 20th May

Martin Cole - 21st May - 2nd July

Are there crocodiles in the river?

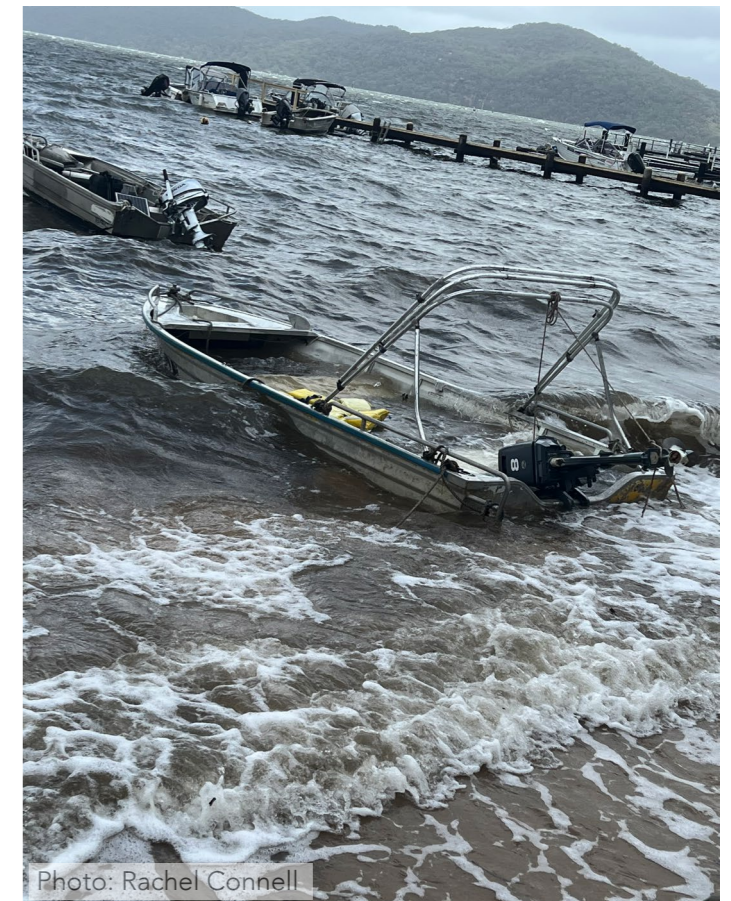


Photo: Rachel Connell

Dangar Monstrarium

Dagmar Reinhardt

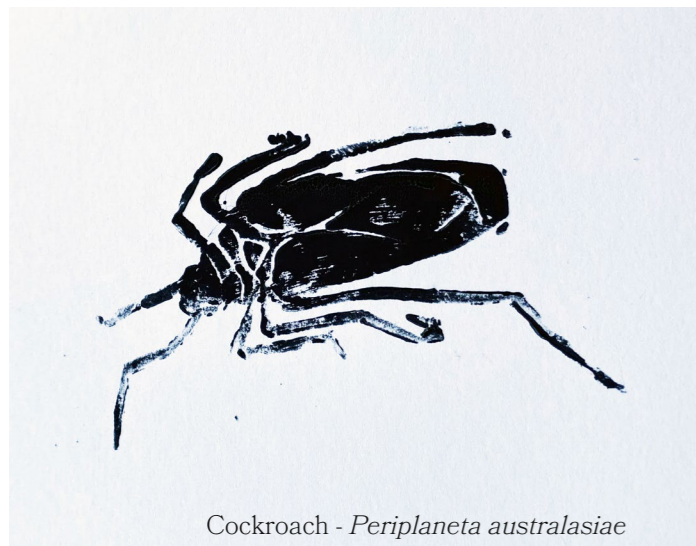
Work in progress for an exhibition later this year at The Depot.
Lino cut series of crawlers found on the island.



Flea - *Cenocephalides canis*



Weevil - *Curculionidae*



Cockroach - *Periplaneta australasiae*

WARNING: This poem contains elements of fantasy and time travel.



THE OLD WOODEN HORSE

Bruce Lambert 2025

From the city gates of Troy
where a mighty horse once stood.
To the broomstick sat astride
by a child who never could.

Such distance have I travelled
my hobby horse and I.
Until that day I came upon
such beauty I did spy.

A noble head and flowing mane
with long and lustrous tail.
This beauty of the equine world
held me tightly in its thrail.

The hobby horse now put to bed
far greater trails to ride.
To own a rocking horse as this
instills a growing sense of pride.

My rocking horse now carries me
to vistas far and wide.
Whatever is the challenge
it takes it in its stride.

That is until I came upon
a scene that I still treasure.
All lights and sounds and movement too
a paean this to leisure.

This merry-go-round or carousel
with painted horses dancing.
My poor rocking horse was not a match
for their movement and their prancing.

But this memory must sustain me
as no longer just a boy.
Now a Greek soldier lying hidden
outside the city gates of Troy.



Cryptic Xword 034

CHICO AND ZYGOTE

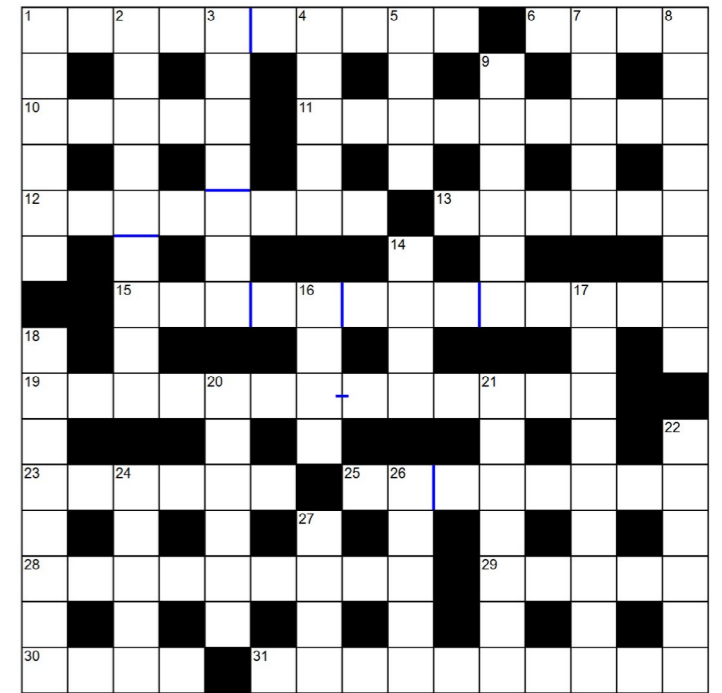
Cryptic crosswords are having a bit of a moment in 2026, with the Wordle-inspired Minute Cryptic presenting a clue per day with a video explanation to the whole world at once, and now Crosshare.org where users can upload all sizes and types of puzzles for all to solve. As always, a richly featured **Exolve version lurks at the QR code** and Exolve's recent update makes it much better on mobile screens. Plus I've uploaded it to **Crosshare**, so give that a try. As always you can give or get help at the **Dangar Island Community Facebook page**.

ACROSS

- 1 Lie about topic reinvented cable technology (5,5)
- 6 Deliver small bone (4)
- 10 Copy problem (5)
- 11 Lothario was in Rome by mistake (9)
- 12 Coast is .23 (8)
- 13 Report of Ethiopian king's fish (6)
- 15 Recovering away from the trees (3,2,3,5)
- 19 Hesitation in exams after two-pint round (7-6)
- 23 A panel on deck (6)
- 25 Naturally concerning track (2,6)
- 28 Curb power over velocity and strengthen (9)
- 29 Hotel Parramatta shoes (5)
- 30 Idiot in QAnon garb (4)
- 31 App screen's pitch records band members (10)

DOWN

- 1 Lightweight's one title in Florida with silly ending (6)
- 2 Dominate a bright star's style of samba (5,4)
- 3 Smooth Elveer Neorunt! (4,3)



- 4 Cartoon sound old queen makes, say (5)
- 5 Doctrines is kink, innit (4)
- 7 Armies of headless ghosts (5)
- 8 Weird how a songwriter might be paid (8)
- 9 One made like an Artist Formerly Known As Prince (6)
- 14 Asian connection rumoured (4)
- 16 Trump first to feign cunning (4)
- 17 Old, second-rate computers for monitors (9)
- 18 Newcastle Jets fans fiddle with Quorn. Sad! (8)
- 20 Trump's action really inconveniences foreign finance startups! (6)
- 21 One more mixed-up anti-hero without one (7)
- 22 Blokes get emergency service for that time of the month (6)
- 24 Vegetable working one-to-one, mostly (5)
- 26 Swift group (5)
- 27 German woman's father heard fight (4)



Online Interactive - Exolve

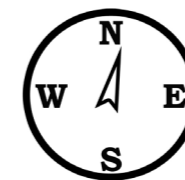


Online Interactive - Crosshare

BoteTiket + Maths

Vector Challenge

JONATHON SYKES



Problem

A vessel travels due east at 24kph, speed over ground. There is a current of 5kph at bearing 060 the whole way. What is the bearing the vessel must steer to maintain this course, and its apparent speed through water?

Solution

A vector is a quantity and a direction; in this case speed and bearing respectively. The vessel is a moving object, but it is immersed in a medium that is also moving, at a different speed and in a different direction. The two vectors together form a third vector relative to the only fixed object in this scenario – the Earth.
Answer: last page.



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