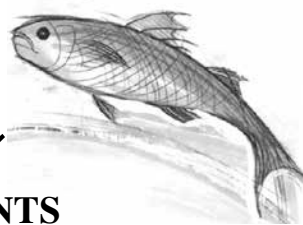


# Mullet Mail



NEWS & VIEWS OF DANGAR ISLAND RESIDENTS

Vol. # 64

www.dangarisland.net

Winter 2019

## Zak's Story

On May 24 my son Zak received a kidney transplant from his father as a living donor. He was diagnosed less than two years ago when he was 18, impacting us all. As we get used to this new normal and make our way to acceptance, I thought it might be nice to share his story and to say a big thank you to the island community for all your thoughts and kind words asking after him. There is not a day goes by where island folk ask after his health and offer their support if ever they can help. This is Zak's story ....



Me and my kidney

### Diagnosis

Two years ago I underwent surgery to correct scoliosis in my back which I had been dealing with for 6 years prior, and to stabilise a fracture from a year earlier when I was in a car crash. I had been in almost constant pain secondary to both that incident and the curve in my spine. The operation involved massive rods and screws being implanted in to my spine, pretty much like braces you get on your teeth. The operation went well in terms of my back; however, I came out of theatre with my face blown up like a balloon, my kidneys not producing any urine, and countless doctors trying to figure out what had gone wrong. I spent 10 days in the ICU. Following multiple blood tests and medications, I was taken in for a biopsy where I was diagnosed with the most aggressive form of IgA Nephropathy (IgAN). IgAN is one of the most common causes of kidney failure in youth, and doctors are

stumped as to what causes it - as am I when I have an identical twin brother who is perfectly healthy. I recovered well from my back surgery, but the next 12 months were a massive battle with my health from a kidney perspective.

### Prolonging the Remaining Function I Had Left

I was put on high doses of steroids which made my skin break out and at one point I was carrying 12 kilos of fluid that my kidneys couldn't filter out of my body. There were even talks of me starting on low doses of chemotherapy drugs in an attempt to slow down the progression of my disease. This did work however it was at the expense of my self-esteem and mental health - I had massive struggles dealing with all the constant changes in my appearance, big and sudden declines in my health and constantly feeling burnt out and exhausted.

### Treatment for Kidney Failure

Ultimately, I ended up getting called into hospital for an emergency catheter placement, so I could commence dialysis the next day, this was only a week following a one-month admission to the Mental Health Inpatient Unit in Hornsby. For the next two months I was in hospital everyday training to be able to do dialysis at home, I wasn't able to work, or study and it was really difficult. Once I had completed my training I was doing my own dialysis at home 8 hours a day 7 days a week and had to base all my plans around my treatments.



### Transplantation

Fast forward 9 months and, following almost 12 months of Mum, Dad, and myself being worked up for transplantation - involving hundreds of scans, blood tests, meetings with social workers, psychiatrists, and dieticians, and no shortage of doctors' appointments, it finally came to the point where I was cleared for transplant! Both my parents were a match and I was thrilled. I've since received the transplant on Friday the 24th of May. The difference it has made so far (in less than two weeks) has been massive for me, I already feel 10 times more alive than I was before. Coming out the other side I'm looking back and realising how much being sick had a toll on my mental health and my body. It's been a crazy journey but it's finally time to close this chapter of my life and I can't wait to leave it in the past.

### Misconceptions

Following my diagnosis, I was surprised at the many misconceptions I had myself, and so did many people about kidney disease and transplantation. Some interesting things I have learnt on my journey include:

- Unless there is a reason such as infection, your native kidneys are not removed to accommodate a transplant. The new kidney is placed usually at the front of your body with your native kidneys remaining at the back.

Cont. Pg 2

## Contents

- P.3 -4 DIL President's Report
- P.4- DIBC Report and entertainment program
- P.5 &7 Historical guide to Dangar Island
- P.8 That Winter Coat - Marina Garvey
- P.9 The Labours of Hercules - Bruce Lambert
- P.8 &10 poetry - Elliot Brock
- P.10 To Another River - Helen Kaminski
- P.11 Crossword
- P. 12 Vale Helen Wakeman

## Zac's Story Cont.....

- \* If you have kidney failure you can still drink (thank god) because alcohol is metabolised completely by the liver.
- \* You are on anti-rejection medications for the duration of the transplanted kidneys life - a lot of people (including myself) were under the assumption that once your body gets used to the new organ you can stop this. That is not the case, if I miss a single dose of my medications I'm at high risk of going into rejection.
- \* The average life expectancy of a kidney from a living donor is 15 years, while a cadaveric kidney averages 10 years. Something I learnt from dealing with this is that a transplant is a treatment and not a cure. In saying this there is no time limit of a kidney, with people living healthily following transplant for 30/40+ years.

\* You don't have to have matching blood types to your donor to be a match. This may have been the case in the past, but it is no longer the be all end all if blood types are not a match.

### Organ Donation

There are currently 1,400 people in Australia on a waiting list for an organ donation, and a further 11,000 people are on dialysis and would benefit from a kidney transplant, however there are many hurdles and barriers involved in becoming listed. While a majority of Australians have said they are willing to be organ donors (69%) only 33% of Australians are registered as organ donors. Last year 1,618 transplants were performed. It's so important to sign up to be an organ donor and it could save hundreds of lives if more Australians were registered. Organ donation is no longer a part of a driver's licence application and is now completely separate and you can register online in two minutes with just a Medicare card. In Australia the life expectancy of kidney donors is actually higher than people who don't donate, this is because your health

is monitored regularly following donation. If you want to be a live donor you can do it altruistically or for a loved one - remember we only need one kidney and when we donate a kidney our remaining one actually grows to about 80% the functionality of when you had 2 to compensate for the loss. You can speak to your GP about becoming a living donor.



By Zak Gollege

## Mel's Story.....

Dear Marina,

*It was really hard for me to get my thoughts in order about all this, I was so glad Zak was able to speak from the heart and also from a place of information. For me it has been a different journey.*

*Do you know what it is like to watch a child go through some really tough stuff and not have any control? To watch them struggle and lash out with frustration, anger, denial and injustice. To bear their anger and still not be able to make it all better for them. Previously, I watched another son do everything he could to sabotage himself. All I could do then was learn to let go. To face my own demons and model the way forward. That's a big lesson to swallow as a parent. To watch a child self destruct and know there is nothing you can really do to help. To console yourself with the lame thought that this is his journey to take and all you can do is be there to pick up the pieces. And to look deeply at yourself and be the best person you can be. To continue to love him, but not condone his behaviour. That child came to terms on his own and is now blossoming with direction, self respect and personal responsibility. In the end there was nothing I could realistically do to adjust his course, the storm blew through him and out and he came back to me better and stronger and more adult than ever.*

*And now there is Zak. He didn't choose this disease to come into his life. He knew he had to have an operation for scoliosis but that was meant to fix the only medical issue he knew he had at the time. Instead that operation opened up his body's well kept secret that it was attacking itself. I remember being informed that he had IgAN some time after his operation. He was still in the hospital after spending more than a week in ICU. I vividly remember the Head of the Renal Unit at the Mater sweeping into Zak's room and dropping the bombshell that Zak had kidney failure and would need a transplant. My head did not compute. "But it was just the operation, the kidney's just recover don't they?" "It was just the drug he was allergic to. Surely it will be ok?" But no, his kidney's would continue to fail and he would need a transplant - in weeks or months. Not years.*

*There is nothing you can do to prepare yourself for that information out of the blue. More is said but you just can't take it in. Too much information and you keep trying to find a way through the diagnosis, to bargain with the science and find a positive outcome. But you can't. The disease itself gives up very few secrets. In Zak's particular case there is no cause. You research and search online but this particular disease has no rhyme or reason. No genetic markers, no understanding of what or how it is that Zak has developed it. And, this is the clincher, no idea of how it will progress. It's like feeling around in a dark room for the light switch, but the bulb is out - nothing to see here. So that has been a journey, accepting what is. Again. Allowing what will be. Again. Not thinking too far ahead because it's just too big to imagine. And you can't prepare for what isn't. Simultaneously planning and not planning for multiple futures. You end*



*up having to let go. Again. Because anything can happen and you can't pre-empt the outcomes. So you wait. And try to get on with your life.*

*You have two other children. Zak has an identical twin, Jasper. He is tested. He is clear. But he has very high iron. Another test, this one is genetic. But it's only one of two genes. Clear enough. Jasper is now on the annual blood test watch. And Jasper has not always been kind to himself. Zak must look at this and wonder. Injustice. Bad luck. It doesn't pay to try to even begin to make sense of that. Rory is tested. Lots of times. He has some issues. But eventually he is given the all clear. But ... like Zak, none of them are really all clear. This disease is always lurking in the background. It's never there - until it is. Zak has an early, aggressive form, but many others develop this in their later years. Slowly. That understanding is a double whammy. When Zak finally goes on dialysis and needs a kidney donor, Jasper, the genetically identical twin, is not able to donate. He cannot be considered.*

*So Zak's father and I are the preferred donors. Testing is exhaustive and intense. It takes months. And I slowly come to terms with uncertainty. Many invasive and detailed tests are taken - are the kidney's working at 50:50? Do my kidneys actually work properly? How many arteries and veins in and out do I have? Do I have any other diseases - cancer, diabetes, heart disease? Am I even a match? Socially and financially am I able to take time out from work and caring to recover?*

*And the disease marches on.*

*Zak's kidney function goes from 50% to 10. I return home from teaching at Coonamble and focus on testing as he slides into dialysis. The whole family is bearing the weight of this and each are finding their own challenges and pathways through the upheaval. And I find myself trying to bandaid the emotions of all my kids. Rory starts his HSC journey under the cloud of illness. He asks for help. No time for me. No time to focus. Putting out spot fires. This was supposed to be my moment of child raising triumph as I relinquish my full parental responsibilities to more and more independent children and follow my own heart. With all the lessons I have learned from parenting. (And how I have grown!) I get anxious and can't focus. Can't concentrate. There is a brief interlude where I start to look to the future for myself but the anxiety and hospital demands come rushing back in.*

*Today. I sit with my son in an apartment near the hospital. He is recovering and is well. There are some medical issues but the next two weeks should stabilise that. Hopefully. I have learned not to presume. Two days before the operation we all got a little lighter. There was something being done. We could hand it over to the process. Let the medical team take care of him. Let the procedure play out and take a breather. I know myself and Rory both got a little happier. We joked and laughed for the first time in ages. There was more grace and ease. In the spaces, Jasper has grown and matured. There is lots to be proud of and happy for. Zak and I are totally rubbing each other the wrong way and I try to hold the space but ... I know we will eventually settle into this new normal and he will grow and blossom. But it will always be there. This transplant is not a cure. It is a treatment and, like everything else about this disease, there is no guarantee or blueprint of how the new kidney will progress. What there is, is NOW. Health and focus and a chance to move forward. And there is a multitude of hope in the scientists and professionals working on bionic kidneys and growing kidneys from the patient's own stem cells. Amazing. Remarkable. Extraordinary people. Five years. 10.*

*I am still a compatible donor. Zak's new kidney is his father's. A most remarkable gift. And I remain the spare....Mel*



## Dangar Island League Presidents Winter Report 2019

Well we are heading into winter now Dangar Islanders, and personally I love the opportunity to rug up and take in the magnificent foggy mornings and crisp days. We might need to perform a winter solstice community rain dance though.

With the election season done and dusted, we will now have to wait until the September 2021 local government elections for our next democracy sausage. Our incumbent State and Federal representatives were returned, with Matt Kean taking on the job of NSW Minister for Energy and Environment. Congratulations to both Matt and Julian.

And a particular thanks to Julian Leaser for doing some seriously hard yards for the island on the NBN issue. After much ado, it seems we will be getting a fixed line. While it may not happen immediately, we have

been assured it will happen. Thanks to all who put time and effort into this campaign.

The League has been keeping fires stoked on the usual issues - Brooklyn planning, Opal card on the ferry, road maintenance and (that old chestnut) Council's waste management. But the big news is (drum roll)...

**We are launching the new League website on 1 July. Please take note of the new address: [www.dangarislandleague.com](http://www.dangarislandleague.com)**

The site will be full of goodies, more interactive, and infinitely more stylish. You'll continue to be able to view correspondence, public minutes and the Mullet Mail on line.

*(cont. pg 4)*

All other island community groups will have a more prominent presence on the new site, with clear links to their own sites. If you want to know what's going on and keep up to date, check in on a regular basis. A huge thanks to Genevieve Ginty for making the site happen, and for making it so good.

On the **Mullet Mail**, we plan to migrate from a printed version to digital – which can be accessed on your computer or your phone. Currently, the Mullet Mail is the League's top expenditure item, and the cost of production greatly exceeds the income we receive from annual membership. As well as being a more efficient medium to work with these days, being on line we will enable us to print articles (virtually) more often, and to inform residents of issues on the boil as needs arise. We are aware that many residents love the MM in its current form, and the move to digital will be staged to avoid unnecessary shocks. There will be a print edition

Did I mention **membership fees**? We regret to announce that the annual subs are going up by 100% - from five dollars to ten dollars per year. That's 2.5 cups of coffee at the shop. Sorry all, but we really can't make ends meet without the rate 'hike' (why do economists love this word so much?). Subs are due 1 July, and can be paid via the new website, or in person at the meeting.

**Meeting - what meeting?** Please join us at the Community Hall at 2pm on Saturday 22nd June for our next public meeting. We'll give a very quick update on island issues, and a brief run through the new website. Then from the floor we'll all be led through initial discussions about community waste management (not the Council variety). I'm excited by the grassroots chatter on this one. So hopefully we'll see you all there.

Cheers to all,

**Vanessa O'Keefe**  
**DIL President**



## DIBC Winter News

Great things are underway at your local "best little club on the Hawkesbury". Our air conditioners have been replaced. Fantastic acts keep getting booked by our chairman of soul... Steve Griffiths. Kitchen continues to thrive. Massive congratulations to our staff who are helping our club to operate effectively, despite the absence of some key personnel. Thank you.

The word for the quarter is memberships. We have members from all over Sydney but the

most important ones are those of our local community. This a way to contribute towards the club. It also means that you will be legal when you choose to have a rare visit to the club when entertaining friends from the mainland at your place.

Large thanks go to Karen Walsh who has tackled the ever present problem of memberships with energy and enthusiasm. Some of you may have received an email from her explaining that your membership is overdue. Please act on these. If you feel there is an error talk to us. My mobile is 0415171781.

Membership fees social \$25 pa or \$50 for 3 years, bowling \$60 pa, Bowler associate of another club \$35, Junior \$10 pa.

The form is attached to the emails Karen is sending and is available for download from our website.

Get on the green...

**Tom Garvey**  
**President Licensee**



## Club Entertainment

We have a great line up of events at the Club to encourage everyone out of the house through the colder months.

To mark the shortest day of the year, we'll be having a **Winter Solstice Ball on Saturday 22nd June**. With a Gypsy theme, this will be a cosy night of mulled wine, hearty winter favourites from the kitchen - soup, tagine and stew - a roaring fire outside and live gypsy jazz supplied the Straight Back Fellows from Sydney. We'll be stoking the fire from 5pm, and the entertainment will kick off around 8pm. Make sure you book a table for this one, it's sure to fill up quickly. Thanks also to Kathy Merrick for the fabulous poster artwork!

We're very proud to welcome back **Jeff Lang** to Dangar on **July 7th**. Melbourne based guitarist-songwriter-vocalist-producer, Jeff has built a reputation around the world for making startling music that is accomplished, intricate, gutsy, melodic and loaded with soul. Often taking unexpected turns, he has consistently inspired his audiences by creating a stylistically diverse catalog of over 25 albums. Winner of 3 ARIA awards, Jeff has collaborated with a wide range of artists - Chris Whitley and Bob Brozman from the US, kora virtuoso Mamadou Diabate from Mali and Rajasthani desert musicians in Maru Tarang - and his restless sense of musical adventure colours the breadth of his songwriting. This show will

be almost certainly be staged inside the club and will definitely book out, so early bookings are advised.

Long-time collaborators **Jo Fabro** and Aaron Flower and Thomas Botting joined forces with this new artistic endeavour and they visit the Bowlo on Sunday 11th August. Together they have created a body of breath-taking music, performing both original compositions, as well as their own arrangements of some of their favourite music, exploring the concept that "everything is jazz". The trio draw on the influences of jazz, blues, soul, pop and Americana, creating beautiful arrangements that are performed with breathtaking harmonies Fabro's soulful and powerful vocals are elevated by Flower's voluptuous guitar and Botting's earthy bass tones to create a sound that is both intimate and full of poke!! They are joined by their regular compatriot Dan Kennedy on drums who rounds out the quartet with style and mustard!!

Moving into spring, we're very happy to announce that **Continental Robert Susz** and his **Blues & Boogaloo Party** are coming to play on September 15th. Perhaps best known for his massive hit in the 80's with Dynamic Hepnotics, 'Soul Kinda Feeling', Robert has kept the flame alive since then with the Mighty Reapers and with a range Continental Blues ensembles, gigging around the country almost constantly. Robert is the benchmark for soul/blues vocals and harp and this country and he has forged an inimitable sound and stage presence.

Bookings can be made by emailing Sharon on [dibc@email.com](mailto:dibc@email.com) via Facebook messenger or on the phone 9985 7083.

**Steve Griffiths DIBC**



### DIBC Glass Amnesty

The club always has a glass amnesty, please return your club glasses that decided to go home with you on the night! Beer, wine and champagne glasses have all gone walkabouts lately and we'd like to see them return home.





## JULIAN LEESER MP DELIVERS FIXED LINE NBN TO DANGAR ISLAND

Julian Leeser MP has confirmed that a fixed line NBN service will be delivered to Dangar Island.

"I am delighted with this excellent outcome we have achieved as a community," said Julian Leeser MP.

"I have been proud to advocate on your behalf to hold NBN to their promise to deliver a fixed line service to Dangar Island."

After a long process advocating for fixed line to be delivered to Dangar Island, the community was told in March by NBN that this was not possible due to the many complexities involved in installing the fixed line.

In April, after a satellite technician visited the

island to conduct signal testing, Senator the Hon Fifield, Minister for Communications and the Arts, was told by NBN that the tree canopy would prevent a large number of premises from being able to receive a satellite signal.

NBN Co has reviewed the technology on the island resulting in the decision to proceed with a fixed line build.

Julian Leeser says the Dangar Island community played a huge role in this outcome.

"I have repeatedly presented your case both to NBN and the Minister, but it was the strong support that I received from Dangar Island that helped demonstrate the importance of NBN reconsidering its plans."

The process of installing the fixed line will take some time, however the NBN website will be best source of information on the timeline once the exact technology is confirmed.

*Annie Phillips*

*Media contact for Julian Lesser MP*



## Air Quality and Wood Heaters

Government authorities such as the Environmental Protection Authority and NSW Health recommend **against** installing or using wood fires. This is because burning wood produces toxic gasses and these gasses have **known effects** on our air quality.

The KEY message from these agencies is *if you can smell or see smoke, it is affecting you* and maybe causing adverse health affects in your neighbor's. It is a fact that people with respiratory disease (eg. asthma, emphysema) are likely to be affected by air quality.

Some of us are dependent on our wood fires for heating and others just like the ambiance. In either case, there are a **few simple things** you can do to reduce the harm that fumes from your fire are causing yourself and your neighbors;

1. Get your fire box/place serviced by a qualified chimney sweep each year or two before you use it (also lowers the risk of house fires)
2. Read the instructions that come with your wood fire box
3. Follow the recommendations about burning wood (e.g. only burn wood that is seasoned, non-treated or painted, no sleepers etc). Some woods should not be used at all (e.g. oleander, treated pine)
4. Burn your wood with the mix of air don't leave it smoldering over night
5. Make sure your chimney is not directing smoke and fumes into your neighbor's house.

Good information can be found on internet websites;

- <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/you're-environment/air/>

open-burning-reducing-pollution

- <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/wood-smoke.aspx>

## LETS LOOK AFTER OUR AIR QUALITY

**Pauline Foote**



# We Need To Talk About MERV....

If you've been introduced to MERV you'll know this increasingly familiar local as an island identity, a welcome addition to the community and something of a lifesaver. MERV is our Medical Emergency Response Vehicle.

Call 000 for help and this vital piece of equipment may be deployed by the Community First Responders as they come to your assistance.

One of the most common questions prospective residents and visitors to Dangar need answered is, "What do you do when you need medical support on the Island?" The response has changed significantly over the years. Call out to your neighbours, call the Fire brigade, call Manfred, call a friend with a boat to get you across the river, call the police.

**Now (and since 2014) the answer is... call 000.**

In the early days, being on the island challenged one's sense of security and a friend's First Aid kit was perhaps the best bet. Now, more of our neighbours have certified first aid training and a reliable system supporting them. The presence of the Community First Responders has made our island lives safer and more secure. Thank you Dr Christine Sanderson and our hard-working island volunteers.

According to a summary prepared by the DI League, the 2016 Census show the number of young children on the island has remained pretty much unchanged over the past twenty years. Of the close to 20 percent, (65 of the total 303 individuals that called the island home in 2016) were under 15 years old and doing what kids do...except this is not a cotton-wool-wrapped suburb. By choice, families move here so rocks, trees, oyster shells, beaches and boats are integral to children's lives. The risks aren't minimal; the fun is exceptional. Kids do get hurt even if parents don't have to worry about playing near the traffic.

The Census summary also shed light on an increased number of older residents. Nearly 24 percent of Dangar residents (74 of us) were 65 years of age and over in 2016, up from 7.4 percent, 19 people in 2001. We are most likely more fit than our contemporaries who

have automatic garage door openers, but some aspects of age aren't a simple walk in the park. Even the strongest hearts and hips have a 'use by' date that sometimes can't be ignored.

From 1950, when Mr Lark's first aid kit came in handy for 'bushwoman of considerable experience' Mrs Laughton who was visiting from Dubbo; to the more recent introduction of MERV with its trained team that can manage the challenging hill up Riverview, our physical safety while living in this boat access, rural environment is more secure. How fortunate!

## **This was first aid in 1950...**

### **FAREWELL GIFT PUT TO VERY GOOD USE**

A first aid kit presented to a former Dubbo man before he left the district several months ago was used for the first time last week on a Dubbo woman visitor to Sydney.

The kit was presented to Mr. V. C. Lark, for many years an active member of the Dubbo Ambulance 'Committee' before he went to live in retirement at Dangar Island [The Lark family lived at 77 Grantham Crescent], on the Hawkesbury River, earlier this year.

Holidaying with the Lark family last week, Mrs. J. E. Laughton, Secretary of the Buninyong Agricultural Bureau, slipped on some rocks at Dangar Island and gashed her right arm on some oyster shells.

As a bushwoman of considerable experience, Mrs. Laughton was able to apply pressure to the artery and stop the flow of blood until she reached the house where Mr. and Mrs. Lark used the presentation first aid kit to bandage the wound.

As the wound required medical attention Mrs. Laughton cut short her holiday and went to Sydney, where eight pieces of oyster shell were extracted from her arm.

Mrs. Laughton then set out for home. 'I wanted to get back for the monthly Buninyong meeting,' she explained. 'I had the books, and they knew that I wouldn't let them down.'

Arriving at Orange, where she had left her car, Mrs. Laughton attended an Agricultural

Conference on Wednesday and then set out alone for Dubbo. Arriving in Dubbo on Wednesday night, she went straight to the Ambulance Station for further treatment to her arm. Since then she has been attended by a doctor and given anti-tetanus injections.

Source: 'Farewell gift put to very good use' (1950) *The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate* 21 October, p. 2.

## **This is now...**

### **Medical care and emergencies**

The most significant development has been the introduction of the Dangar Island Community First Responders in July 2014, resulting in a major improvement in emergency care.

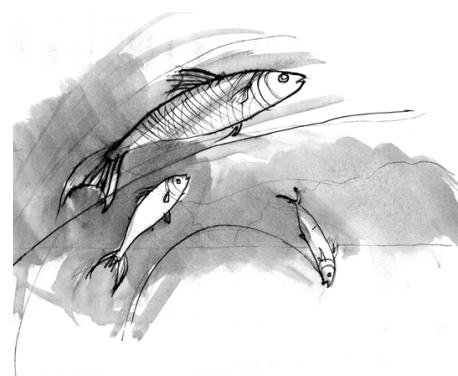
The First Responders are part of NSW Ambulance, which provides the unit with equipment, medications and training. Working from a small, well-fitted-out base next door to the Fire Brigade on Neotsfield Avenue, they operate on a 24/7 volunteer roster.

A 000 call results in the despatch of the First Responders by the NSW Ambulance Control Centre at the same time as an ambulance and other emergency services are mobilised. With help of the mini-ambulance MERV, they can get the patient to a boat pickup for transfer to a waiting ambulance on the mainland.

They have also assisted numerous casualties where an ambulance was not required.

*Guide to Historic Dangar Island: Gem of the Hawkesbury*, 3rd edition, p 54.

## **DIHS - Dangar Island Historical Society**



# That Winter Coat

With the cooler weather now coming our way you might be thinking of treating yourself to a new winter coat or jacket. Something warm but light, light enough to squish into a corner of a suitcase for that overseas trip and know with certainty it'll never blow your baggage allowance. Something that'll go anywhere. And you see them everywhere. Chic urban streets, sporting ovals, ski slopes, back yard bbqs, parks, bush trails, shopping mall food courts, yes around every corner you'll see one of those cute puffy jackets or vests, light as a feather and so toasty warm and currently on show in a range of colours in any number of stores. Just the thing. What's more when you look at the price tag, as I did you might then immediately think 'Oh, how reasonable, this is such a bargain, how on earth do they do it?'

Good question.

Yes, it's a question worth considering particularly if you happen to be in the market for a jacket upgrade.

Did you know for example that:

- *Currently at least 70% of the duck and goose down filling those perky little jackets comes from China. (Wikipedia)*
- *Plucking the feathers from live birds, usually four times a year, has been the main method of harvesting the down. It is a gruesome and painful process.*
- *A growing consumer spotlight on the down supply chain has resulted in a number of high profile manufacturers adopting a 'Responsible Down Standard'.*

- *The challenges and expense involved in the physical auditing of suppliers means that live plucking of birds remains a widespread. 'A recent investigation by Peta found that of 66 Chinese suppliers contacted by phone or email, nearly half still sold live-plucked down wholesale'. (Guardian)*
- *A label might state that a product has been 'ethically sourced' – in most instances it is very difficult, if not impossible, for a consumer to find out what this means.*

So if you're still in the market for that new winter coat .....

Marina Garvey

# HIGH TEA PARTY

*In the Community Garden*

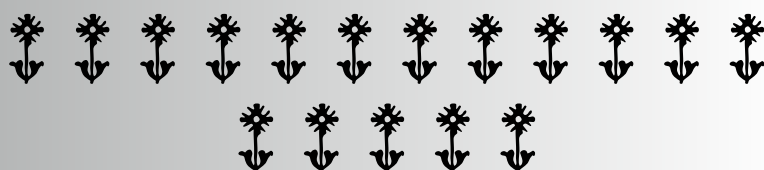
29<sup>th</sup> September, 2 - 4pm

*A fun-day fundraiser brought to you by D.i.G*

*Tea, Treats and Activities*

*Watch our Facebook page for developments and growth:*

[www.facebook.com/dangargarden](http://www.facebook.com/dangargarden)



## Dream time

Day  
Reading  
Elegant  
Air  
Mind  
Telling  
In  
Moments  
Edged

Elliot Brock

## Bowling Green Fees

VISITORS WELCOME  
MEMBERS FREE

\$10 per adult | \$5 under 18

Groups of 10 or more  
on Saturdays half price.  
Pay at the bar in Club  
opening hours or  
out of hours place fees  
in the honesty box.





# The Labours of Hercules

In that pantheon of the gods all things are possible. I on the other hand have managed to defy the immutable laws of physics and am well into my forty third year on the island; forty of those as a member of the Dangar Island Bush Fire Brigade.

By 1981 I had enough money saved to enable me to buy a block of land on the top of the island. This block had been left untouched for at least sixty years and was covered in impenetrable lantana which was sixteen foot high and less than a foot apart.

The only way to judge the slope was to see the top of the lantana as it progressed up the block. There were a number of one hundred foot high Blackbutt and the skeletal trunks of smaller trees. With the lantana towering over the road, the only way to clear it was to start and just keep going.

My father lent me a large block and tackle which I used to drag each individual lantana tree (for such was their size) from the ground, leaving a root system in the ground similar to steel wool. As each tree was removed I was then down on my hands and knees like a wombat following up every bit of root. This process took me a period of eight months, working from dawn to dusk, seven days a week.

With the task finally at an end I was left with what looked like a ploughed field running up the slope and three gigantic haystacks of compressed lantana. Think of old English movies with the haystacks in the field.

It was at this time I realized that in an earlier era the block had been used as a community rubbish dump (no garbage collection) and that I now possessed what appeared to be thousands of broken and whole beer bottles, along with assorted other detritus.

The council garbage contractor gave me six woolpacks, about one cubic metre each in size, to remove the bottles and glass. I began filling them but soon found that I had to smash all of the bottles to enable them to fit in. Unfortunately the woolpacks could not then be lifted off the ground. This made the contractor very angry! His woolpacks would soon begin to rot and he was forced to give me six more to enable half of the contents to be transferred into them.

Such are the joys of property ownership.

My next problem now became how to dispose of the giant haystacks of lantana. What would happen when I put a match to the first haystack? Would disaster ensue?

With three giant haystacks of compressed lantana to deal with, I felt that it was safest to only attempt to burn one at a time.

Mid-week at the end of March did not seem too dangerous so surely I could handle it on my own. Proceeding to the Fire Station I secured a standpipe and several lengths of 38mm fire hose along with all the necessary fittings. Back up the hill and I had the standpipe connected to the water main and the hoses running along in the gutter up to the block.

A young schoolboy who was a cadet in the brigade was unlucky to be off school and was duly seconded to man the standpipe.

Thus fortified, I put a match to the base of my lantana tower and stood back. The conflagration that thus ensued was indeed impressive. The

heat that was given off was incredible and the smoke, a sickly yellowish purple rose up into the sky and then spread out like an atomic mushroom cloud more than half a mile across.

After some time things seemed to be going well, so I was able to let the cadet go. I am standing watching the fire when I become aware of a strange occurrence behind me. It is the captain of the brigade who is bent almost double and is gasping and wheezing like grampus. He had been driving back from Hornsby when he saw the smoke, jumped in his boat and raced to the island, running full bore up from the beach.

“Y-O-U #####!” were the first words that he was able to utter. Then after some time I was able to mollify him and show that all was well. I was then informed that Hornsby Fire Control was being inundated with phone calls that the island was on fire. Luckily I got away with it.

The fire burnt from about 2.00pm until 3.30am, during which time the island had moderately heavy rain which only managed to reduce the flame height somewhat. When I finally doused the embers it would have been at least 4.00am.

Heat that the fire created resulted in the ground in that area being sterilized for several years. All in all an exercise best not repeated.

I now had a block of land cleared and ready for building but as luck would have it, no one was prepared to lend me the money to do it. It looked as though I would be living in a 2000 gallon water tank on its side until providence intervened. My father had recently retired and my parents generously offered to give me my inheritance early.

I thus became an owner builder with no idea of what to do. My parents had never owned a car, yet my father travelled all over Sydney by public transport, sourcing all the building materials. My youngest brother had just completed his apprenticeship as a carpenter and was contracted by my parents to take over.

He and another new carpenter had just gone into business together and they had their own apprentice. I, as the labourer for everything thus became the low man on the totem pole (the real life title of a book).

Now the really hard work began.

*Bruce Lambert*



## Kookaburra

Around the bush you hear many birds  
The kookaburra will laugh at you all day  
While the magpie crows in pain

Some say the kookaburra is laughing at the magpie  
But it's humans he laughs at  
As they believe they are the smartest on earth

*Elliot Brock*



## Dangar Island Community First Responders

For medical emergencies on the Island

### ...Call Triple Zero...

•We run a 24/7 roster that provides emergency medical response for islanders and visitors

•We provide emergency care, and we liaise with the paramedics so they can get to you quickly.

•In an emergency, please don't call individual CFRs on our mobile numbers – this is unreliable and slows us down

•At the same time an ambulance is being dispatched for you, the CFRs on duty are called up by the NSW Ambulance control centre.

•Pensioners and those with health insurance are covered

•If you're not covered, consider taking out "ambulance only" health insurance

## "To another river"



The Hawkesbury has been my home for fifteen years - at Berowra then Dangar. I fell under its spell one night at Neverfail Bay with its long water pipe tapped into a spring somewhere deep in the park. It never failed until the law demanded we let the sweet water flow freely to the salt and tanks were erected with some grumbling.

The mood of the river remains d.i.y. and not always legal. The wild spirit of these bays and creeks nurtures and holds "boat access" locals like us. We chose to live with the challenges because the pluses were too wonderful to resist - and finally very hard to leave. We fit in with the elements and become habituated to the communal effort to manage them.

How simple to sigh with relief as the tide surges around our unlocked homes.

I am leaving with a heavy heart as age threatens independence on a laborious island. The pluses of leaving occur too - buying potatoes, bags of oranges..wine...and oh Brooklyn how the parking nightmare repels excursions for fear of returning to it.

The Shoalhaven is my next river - in a shed on a swathe of green along a quiet reach - with my car at the door. Ahhh!

Bye wild Hawkesbury, bye high caves gaping mutely upon us. Bye all the familiar faces on our womb-island...I will drop by sometimes to re-charge.

*Helen Kaminski.*

### Would you like to learn how to make felt?

I will be running a one-day workshop for a group of 6 people, in the Dangar Island Community Hall, around the end of June.

You will learn the basics of felt-making while producing a unique and beautiful scarf to take home.

Morning & afternoon tea will be provided.

Total cost \$95, including materials.

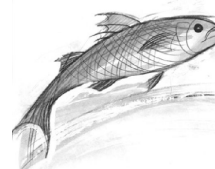
A range of colours will be available to choose from.

Please call Lisa Hayes on 0405 005 745  
or email at [lisahayes.aus@gmail.com](mailto:lisahayes.aus@gmail.com)  
to register your interest or ask for more information.

## Dangar Island League Membership

If your membership details have changed and you would like to update them and continue to receive occasional email updates from the Dangar Island League please send your current details to:

[secretary@dangarislandleague.net](mailto:secretary@dangarislandleague.net)





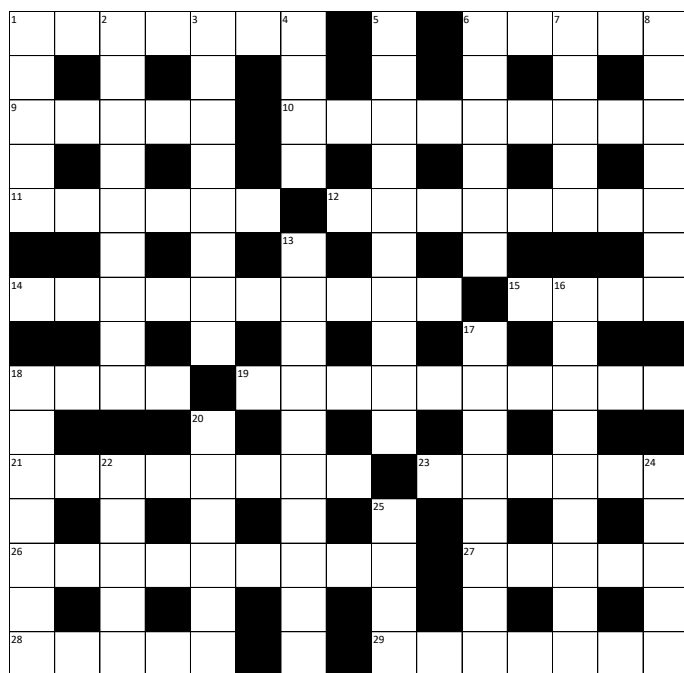
# COMBO XWORD

0011by Chico

Winter 2019

**William Archibald Spooner** (1844–1930) was a long-serving Oxford don, supposedly liable to mix up syllables with unintentionally comic effect. Often invoked in crosswords, such cunning stunts are called Spoonerisms, and you'll find one here in one of the cryptic clues. I've *italicised* the definition part(s) of the cryptic clues, which are indicated by a C in the parentheses.

My apologies for last ed's crossword, which swapped two across clues, making the puzzle too difficult.



## Down

- 1 Of 19A's position (5)
- 2 Vertical section of stormwater system (9)
- 3 *Soar trip interchanges?* (C8)
- 4 Light rail car (4)
- 5 *Valuation* of corrupt man's assets (C10)
- 6 Included in article, very *intelligent* (C6)
- 7 Initially army vehicles enter race to *head off* (C5)
- 8 Go wrong injecting soft *enzyme* (C7)
- 13 A car in fabrication is *inexpensive* (C10)
- 16 Colour vision defect, as originally named by its Mancunian discoverer (9)
- 17 Beach near Mosman, and Queen's holiday cottage in Scotland (8)
- 18 Pierre's day borne by rising desire to *travel* (C7)
- 20 Two points for *most recent* (C6)
- 22 Sandwich (slang) (5)
- 24 Powers (5)
- 25 Diary published on the internet (4)

## Across

- 1 Spooner's fake history *published on the internet* (C7)
- 6 Limit of island (5)
- 9 Agency (5)
- 10 Depend on Jane name-dropping *without ostentation* (C9)
- 11 Capital of Portugal (6)
- 12 Toxic building material (8)
- 14 Became overnight success (4,2,4)
- 15 One-eyed Norse god (4)
- 18 Arnott's cracker (4)
- 19 Beatles (two) see *Pope* (C4,4,2)
- 21 Stay nude, awful *wobbly* (C8)
- 23 *Significance of foreign origin* (C6)
- 26 Unspoken (3-6)
- 27 *Propose lift* (C5)
- 28 *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, for example (5)
- 29 Girl's beginning to use old speed in *run, though clumsily* (C7)



*Double-definition (23A and 27A) and &lit. (3D) clues don't have a separable definition part in the clue, so they are all italicised here. Double defs are usually very short. &lits are usually indicated by a terminal ? or ! Try this one: Terribly evil? (4)*

## Dangar Island Mullet Mail

Unleash your inner writer....your stories, poems, opinion pieces....have your say (respectfully and kindly of course) and send to:

[marina.mulletmail@gmail.com](mailto:marina.mulletmail@gmail.com)

# Vale Helen Wakeman, 07/12/1931 - 03/04/2019



*The following is an edited version of the eulogy presented by Helen's daughter Holly.*

Helen Esther Stewart was born in 1931. She came from a line of beautiful strong women. Her grandmother was sent from her home in Scotland to Australia as a 17-year-old in search of a better life. She travelled alone on a sailing boat to a country where she knew no one and of course she made good.

Helen's mother grew up on a farm in Stockinbinge. When the Japanese entered the war Helen and her sister were evacuated to Orange and went to boarding school there until the end of the war. Helen was a bright student. She left school in 1946 to become a dental nurse but went back to night classes to do her matriculation so she could attend University, to which she won a scholarship. Helen did a bachelor of arts at Sydney University 1950-54. This was the point in her life that she first found great meaning. She really loved English literature, Latin, philosophy and poetry. Her love of words was something that stayed with her for her whole life. It led her to gain a librarian qualification and she began her life at the NSW State library and later at Fisher library. She also loved to sing. Helen sang in the choir at Sydney University, and for all of her life, a song made her light up.



She met her first husband, Arthur Wakeman in 1960 on a boat cruise around Hayman Island. They began married life in Newcastle where their daughter Holly was born and then moved to North Turramurra. Their second child Melanie was born in 1969 and baby sister Amelia in 1973. Helen had a tough struggle with postnatal depression during this time. In 1982 the couple separated, but remained good friends. Helen moved to Pennant Hills and built a passive solar house.

In 1994 Helen and Ted met, at a workshop called "A course in miracles." The real miracle was that they found each other. Ted said their connection at the workshop was instant and the two of them were absolute soul mates. He said in his relationship with Helen, she had to step away from the more conservative ideas that had given her security in life. They moved to Dangar in 2003.

Helen loved Ted, her family, new ideas, books, poetry, gardening and being in nature. She was an environmentalist long before we started talking about greenhouse gases. She hated waste of any sort. She always preferred a meaningful conversation to small talk.

Helen battled with the dark cloud of depression. She was constantly working on herself to try and find internal peace.

The final chapters of Helen's life for were focussed on her battle with dementia. She was acutely

aware that her mind and memory were compromised, and this caused huge anxiety and stress. Eventually Helen had had enough; she decided to stop eating. Her family sat with her for her final three weeks of life.

Holly wrote: "it was a great honour for us to be at her bedside and cushion her leaving the world with all the love and kindness she had showered on us in her lifetime.

It was a lovely thing to see in Mum's last years with dementia the beautiful words and acts of kindness she so freely gave in her life returned to her in the beautiful words and actions of others - particularly those in the Dangar Island community".

Helen is survived by her three wonderful daughters, beloved grandchildren Ivan, Oscar Mica and Lucy; James and Simon; Felix and Hattie; Milo and Willow; Noah and Louis; and of course, her partner Ted, who will remain with us on Dangar Island.

