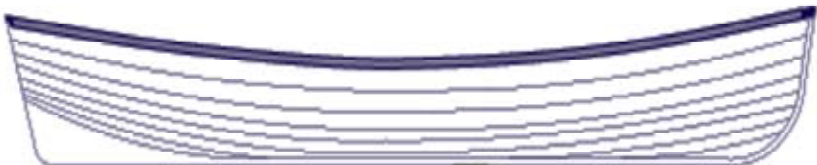
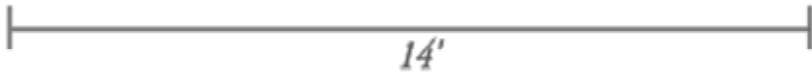


SHIPS IN THE NIGHT

issue one

Joy Hirst
White Street Mall, Frankston
4 light boxes - changing monthly
January to June 2010



SHIPS IN THE NIGHT - issue one

THE YELLOW MACK

The low tide at Point Lonsdale on April 11, 2008 was -0.01 as I walked East across the sea garden to the ledge that dropped into the rushing tide. The focus of my walk was Point Nepean and the entrance from Bass Strait into Port Phillip Bay. This is the narrow and dangerous space between the two headlands known as 'the Heads' or 'the rip',

The sun bounced off the sand hills on the distant shore of Point Nepean and every 20 paces I stopped to take a photograph covering a distance of approximately 680 metres.

On the west side of the rocky point there was a small opening, with breaking water across it; however, on advancing a little more westward the opening assumed a more interesting aspect, and I bore away to have a nearer view. A large extent of water presently became visible within side; and although the entrance seemed to be narrow, and there were in it strong rippings like breakers, I was induced to steer in at half past one.

Matthew Flinders R.N.
Monday 26 April 1802

The -0.01 low-tide exposed Neptune's Necklace and flattened bright green vegetation normally under water in the sea garden. Now and then there were large pools of clear water full of life and on about the fifteenth photograph there appeared a yellow dot in the distance.

Maintaining my trajectory and a photograph every 20 paces it was possible to work around the yellow dot. As I drew closer a man emerged in a yellow mack bent over a large clear pool in deep concentration. We were within speaking distance when he asked if

I wanted him to move out of the way but I was intrigued and his moving seemed irrelevant.

Standing up to his calves in clear blue seawater the man in the yellow mack and white towelling hat was collecting something only available when the tide was -0.01. He had a small magnifier around his neck, in his hands a small specimen bottle and another instrument. He was reserved with a sense of quiet and when I asked what he was collecting he answered, 'small things'. 'How small, amoeba size?' 'A bit bigger' he said. 'What are you collecting the small things for?' 'The museum.' 'Have you been collecting for a long time?' 'For fifty years' he replied and it seemed important to know if the collection came from this pool so I asked, and he said, 'yes.'

We stood two or three paces apart, he in water up to his calves, pants rolled up, in his yellow mack and towelling hat and me standing on Neptune's Necklace with camera quietly pondering 'the Heads' and the space between.

The water roared through the narrow east west entry to Port Phillip Bay where the channel dredge floated between Point Lonsdale and Point Nepean - a shadow upon the waters.

'The time has come,' the Walrus said,
'To talk of many things:
Of shoes - and ships - and sealing-wax -
Of cabbages - and Kings -
And why the sea is boiling hot -
And whether pigs have wings.'

Through the Looking-Glass (1872). chapter iii
Lewis Carroll

The oceans occupy just over 70 per cent of the Earth's surface and for centuries have been a place of mystery, romantically portrayed in poetry, prose and song. The imagination of sailors, travelers and writers expressed love and fear of the sea as they also fantasized about life and death in the depths of the unknown.

Sir Arthur C. Clarke found it "inappropriate to call this planet Earth when it is quite clearly Ocean."

In 1970 James Lovelock proposed a scientific hypothesis for the Earth as a single, self-regulating living system now known as the Gaia hypothesis. Gradually marine research has located the hydrological systems of oceans within the cycle of water. The evidence shows how water is continually exchanged from oceans into the atmosphere through evaporation, cloud formation, precipitation, wind transport and rain to river flows, to oceans, known as the global or hydrological cycle. Until recently a balance has been maintained in the relationship of Carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the oceans and the atmosphere.

How is this balance to be maintained as atmospheric CO₂ increases with the burning of forests and fossil fuels? What are the consequences of disturbing carbon sinks in the oceans?

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