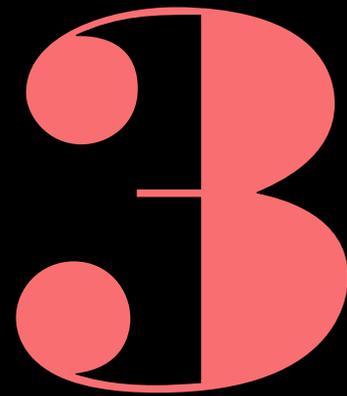


The Hastings Book of the Earth



A WILD WILD NIGHT



My Dad loved the sea and sailing. He'd been in the navy in the war. He was titled Lt Cdr on envelopes, short for Lieutenant Commander. He kept a 23 foot sailing boat near Southend where I grew up. Her mooring was off Two Tree Island, where there was a boatyard and the municipal landfill site.

Dad and I were never close. Up to the age of around 15 I'd occasionally accept an invitation to go sailing with him, nudged by my Mum. She would never go; Mum was afraid of the water. Like Mum, I'd failed to learn to swim but I liked being on the water and felt secure in my lifejacket. Dad was a strong swimmer.

It was good to be out on the estuary, sailing up to the pier and back. More often than not we'd miss the tide on the way back and become grounded before we'd make the mooring.

continues 



Long after I'd left home and had my own life working in London, I took a phone call on the payphone in the hallway of my bedsit in Muswell Hill. On the other end was a police officer. He told me my Dad's boat had been found adrift and crewless off the Kent coast after stormy weather. He suggested I go home to be with my mother while she awaited news.

Dad's body was later found washed up on a mud bank. My older brother had the task of identifying him. When it came to the funeral I tentatively expressed a wish to be one of the pall bearers. I was told it was best to leave it to the professionals.

I bought my first suit to wear to his funeral.

continues 

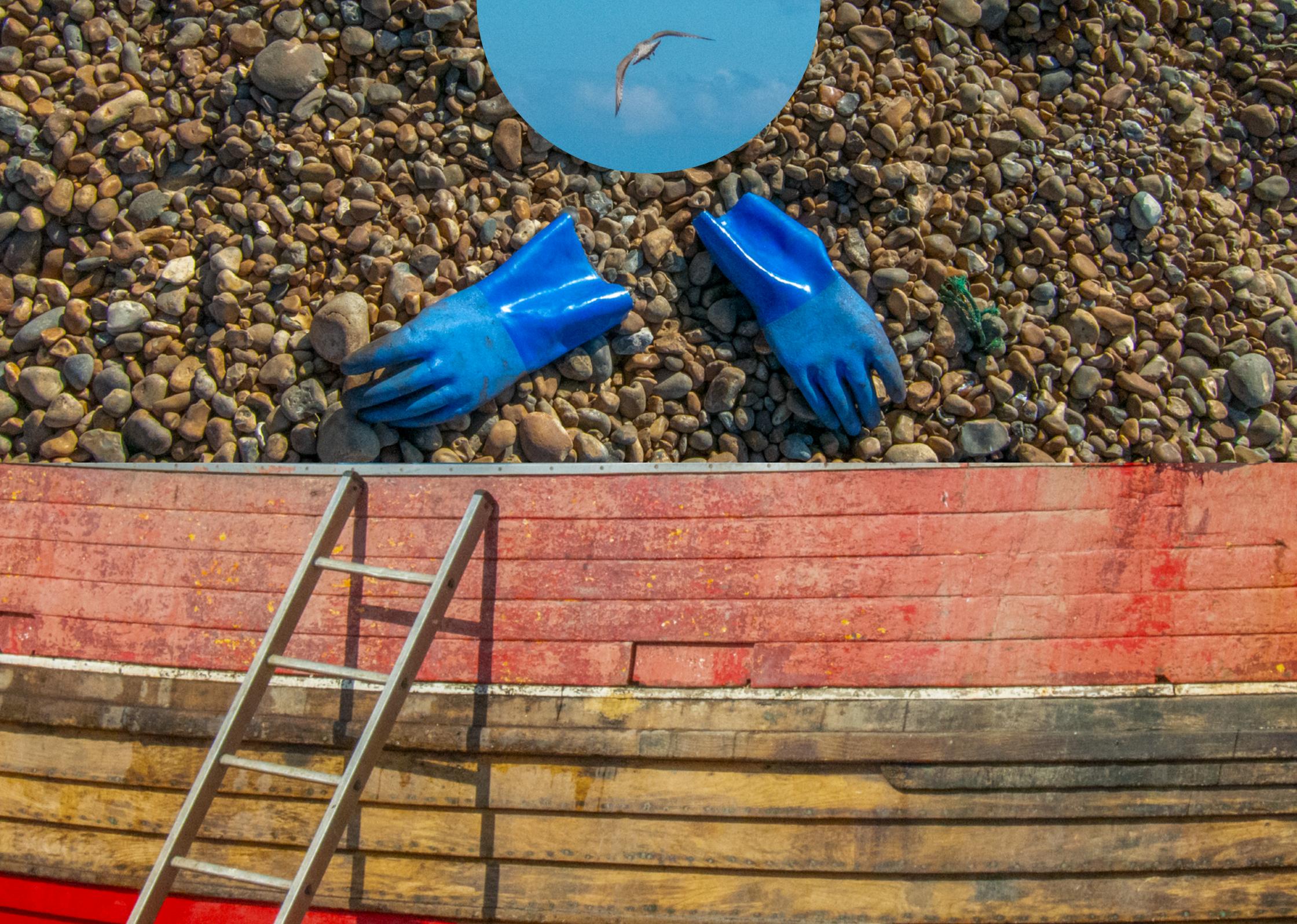


The last entry in Dad's log book says:

Sunday 3 May Harty Ferry

*A wild wild night with banshee howling wind from the south west
barometer 30.1 steady. ■■*













continues in part 4 🖱️