

KENDAL ORAL HISTORY GROUP INTERVIEW 0324F

Kendal Flood Project Interview

R1 - Jimmy Todd born 1953

R2 - Helen Todd born 1962

Interviewed June 2016

0324f Summary Sheet

Track 1, pp. 1-2

The family business is on Mintsfeet Industrial Estate. Flooding has been getting worse on Mintsfeet in recent years, but nothing as bad as December 2015.

They live in Longsleddale and they knew there were problems when they left for work on Saturday 5 December. Put wellies in their 4-wheel drive.

Sent Saturday girl home in the morning. Description of how the water came into Mintsfeet during the day. Busy in the morning with people getting supplies in.

Brother phoned to say things were very bad in Longsleddale, so would get worse in Kendal. Had to decide – to stay or to go. They stayed.

Track 2, pp. 2-3

Told customers to go to stop them becoming trapped. Piled up sandbags. Road was flooding. Watched people carrying things out of nearby businesses.

Description of the river, of the area, and the location of their business.

It was frightening. Tried to clear a blockage to ease the flow of water but failed.

Returned to premises as they were now marooned.

Track 3, pp. 3-6

Sat and waited. Watched the river rise. Description of the water and the things floating in it. Lifted stock up onto tables and into waterproof bins. Saved most of their stock despite the water coming in. The whole shop was flooded.

The office is upstairs so they could go up there. Switched the power off downstairs, but still on upstairs. The flood at its worst c. 10 o'clock at night.

Shuffled through the water to prevent a tidal wave. Emergency lighting worked.

Both very busy so not eaten for much of the day. By 11 o'clock went upstairs to eat.

Track 4, pp. 7-8

Ate upstairs and listened to the roar of the water. Scary. Settled down to sleep

By 11 o'clock water starting to recede a little. Daughter in a flooded house elsewhere

Felt fortunate that they were safe.

Track 5, pp. 8-10

Relative tried to rescue them by tractor – failed. By 3 o'clock water seeping away.

By Monday most of water had gone. Luckily the water was not polluted.

Description of the inside and outside of premises.

Relatives came to help with the clear-up plus neighbours and friends.

All emptied out on the Sunday. Opened for business in Monday morning. Possibly the only business on Mintsfeet not to close. Their premises are slightly higher.

Track 6, 10-13

On Monday still clearing up. Customers arriving. Mintsfeet a scene of devastation.

Skips everywhere. The water receded quickly. Nature is too powerful to stop.

Dealing with insurers and decided not to make a claim and much of their stock safe.

Managed by doing things themselves – as the family always have.

Extent of rainfall that day. Feel they are very lucky. Other businesses on Mintsfeet.

Lots of machinery and equipment thrown away.

Everyone pulled together.