

Alban White (Fisherman) Born 1909.

P1.

Seafront damage caused by the hurricane 1987. Bits of roof and timber, glass and tiles and seaweed lying around. The firs in the recreation ground were down.

Hythe was lucky that it was a dead tide of 5.2 m. and not a long or spring tide of 7 m. which would have flooded South Rd and Ladies' Walk. Also the golf links would have been flooded.

P2.

Two boats were damaged, one of which was not secured until two fishermen pulled it up.

Both lifeboat houses were damaged, also Griggs fish shop cum office.

There was a tremendous lot of water running down Albert Rd and South Rd.

**Alban White (Fisherman) Born 1909**

**Orchard Valley, Hythe**

**Transcript of tape recording of interview about the seafront damage caused by the hurricane of 1987.**

**Typed verbatim November 2004**

After the storm I went down to have a look around the beach to see what damage was done and it was absolutely strewn with bits of roof and timber, you name it, it was there. A lot of the sheds had lost their tops. There was seaweed all over the place where the sea had been up and run in through. Naturally there were tiles, glass. I had about 5 punctures off of it [on his bike] laying all over the road. The thing is, I think Hythe was very lucky that it was a very dead tide, a 5.2, What we call dead tides. If it had been a long tide, a spring tide as people know it, I think Hythe would definitely have been flooded all south of the canal, would definitely have been flooded, very bad, because the sea was running over the sea wall as it was at a 5.2 metres rise and fall. The damage at different places – I went and had a look around at other places, such as down South Road and that. Trees were down; the big firs all along the recreation ground, they were all lying down. Several behind the Ladies' Walk. Two or three roofs out, two or three houses with their walls all damaged, part of their house blown in. There was glass and rubbish laid all over the road. I should think for anyone who was silly enough to go out on a night like that was asking to get their head cut off.

*What was the swimming pool like?*

Well, I don't know. When I saw it there were two great lumps off the pool itself, off the new roof – they'd put a new roof on it I think – and there were two sections tore out of it.

*If it had been a long tide, where would the sea have come, how far would it have gone?*

Oh, I think the water down like South Road, along Ladies' Walk, had it have been long tides, 7 metre tide or anything like that, the water would have been running right into the canal, definitely. The only place that there would have been, of that area, would have been the high rise of Stade Street, right on the top of the brow. That would have forced all the water down South Road and all through The Grove and out on to there. All that lot would have been flooded.

*Would the canal bank have stopped it or would it have gone further, into the High Street?*

No, I don't think it would, it might have gone a bit, no I shouldn't like to say because you've got quite a bit of ground that rises towards the canal bank, but I think definitely the golf links, that would have been flooded. The canal would have been flooded from that end, flooded right over because the golf links and all that lot would have took all the water and that would have been one mass of water, that's my opinion of it, had it have been long tides – it would have been a pretty mess.

*Has that happened, within living memory?*

No, not in my time, good lord, no, not even when I was quite a young kiddie, well, I was alive, I was 3 or 4 years, 4 or 5 years when it happened; one Easter when the sea wall went at the top of St. Leonard's Road, tore right off there, there was a tidy lot of sea that day, according to what people, you know, Sonny Griggs' father and that told me. I wasn't old enough to remember it as to talk about it.

*What about the fishing boats this time, were any of them damaged or had they pulled them back?*

No there were no fishing boats because the chaps that was fishing then were there and they got the boats right up, but there was two boats damaged. They're registered, well one was registered as a fishing boat but it's never done any fishing, only privately, chap who wouldn't know nothing about the fishing at all. They hadn't been down to see the boat for a long time – it was on the slipway, tied up with a bit of string! That washed down and Jimmy Allen and that they went, - and young Barry Wonfor, what's the two fishermen there, they went and put a rope on it and managed to save the boat from being smashed right up but it got the stern knocked off of it and a bloomin' great hole in it. In the engine - 'cos everything was swamped, just plain swamped, they'd been down and pulled the boat up, or someone's pulled the boat up and left the boat up but I don't think the owners have been anywhere near it.

*What happened to the old lifeboat house - was that damaged?*

Oh yes, they had sheets of tin and that blown off the new lifeboat house and the old one had a few ridge tiles blown off, but Griggs's hut, the tall one as we call it, that had two or sheets of asbestos torn off, which they have made it as an office, Griggs' have got it as an office where they – well I think it is one of their main offices now, you know, instead of being in the High Street, see, 'cos they use the bottom underneath for fish don't they, selling and all that. But, otherwise there was another shed blown down, that was blown to pieces. There was seaweed all over the road, along the road and that where the tide had washed right in there. They say the sea was tremendous, tremendous sea.

*Were the houses flooded along West Parade?*

I don't think they were flooded, but there was a tremendous lot of water down Albert Road and all that lot, tremendous lot of water, and I think there was quite a lot of water running down South Road, you know, where it was running down the Stade, down the slope and down the road, so they tell me. But otherwise, it's very lucky it was as we said, 'dead tides'. It was one of the shortest tides of the year that was, a 5.2.

*When was high tide that night?*

Oh, I think between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning I think, and in the afternoon, you know.

**End of Tape.**