

Nada Voorbij 30 April 2010

Rachel Mallaby : This is Rachael Mallaby I'm talking with Mark Wyborn from Lake Macquarie City Council's Maintenance Department about the storms that swept Lake Macquarie on the Queens birthday long weekend [?on?] June 2007.

Mark Wyborn : So basically we, on the Thursday we knew the storm was coming. Friday afternoon we'd already had some calls for it `cause it was pretty heavy wind and rain on Friday. I was on call so I got home about 4 o'clock Friday and got a few things sorted out at home. And then I think the phone started ringing at half past four and basically that started from then so I my first call for the art gallery, have water coming in through their roof and a lot of water up in there so I went there first and they were really [?uncontrolling?] the wind hadn't really gone berserk through there yet cause it was still, by this time it was sort of 5ish. So I went from there into [?Charlestown?] so I was, I mucked around I had a call, I had to go into Hamilton for a property that we own there through properties but they had a basically I couldn't get in there at that stage, `cause I tried to go up the floods had already started so I couldn't get into there. I got a call from the girls at Charlestown library and they had water just streaming in coming in straight in under the back, the court yard in through the back there the water was piling up in there and that whole back area was flooding. So I helped them out and got sorta got that some of the water away and that stage the wind hadn't gone really badly in through there yet. So that sorta took another an hour or so by the time I got back and then I got another phone call saying that the girls, that they couldn't get out and the flooding was starting to come up everywhere at that stage and I had another dozen or so calls from all over the place. And I'd, actually on my way there I was going past Fennell Bay and the water was up past and I've got a four wheel drive and just the water, the amount of water going past, you know where the St Joey's is there, the water was right up to the top of the wheels at that stage. So I dragged two people, two people got bogged, got trapped in there so I got two people out there but went back to, by this stage it was sort of half past seven and the Esplanade was just underwater through that and pass in front of Pippy's and then I went through, I got to, through water to the Art Gallery. Got into there and basically they decided, we decided. Look you can't take a normal car, even the bottom of the lake there the flooding was coming up. The worst rain ever you like you were driving at 30 k an hour just driving [?trees], it was just horrendous and cars there was a car at [?around] Esplanade and he was beside me and we went through a fairly big sheet of water and he just, one minute and the next he drifted across the other side of the road and I rang my boss at that stage and said look I've got two more calls and I'm going home this is just too dangerous to out in that and he going no go home go home so I got on the way back to the Art Gallery and the girls were pretty scared so we got them sorta sorted and they said can we go home and I said look don't got anywhere `cause you won't get a normal car through there I can run you home and then I had another few calls so they stayed there or they were going to stay there and see what they could do with the water. They had some, I think they had a big art show on that weekend they had couple of million dollars worth of art from the art gallery in Sydney. So they were really worried about leaving that so they ended up staying there, and I said look ring me every hour just make sure you are going

alright. So and I was trying to get back to home at that stage and the roads were flooded. Toronto at the bottom of the where the as you going down from the fire station on the bottom of that road, Main Road there it was totally under water so I thought that's alright I go back round through Awaba it was all under water at that stage so this was about 8 o'clock, half past eight at that stage and I'd Kel has been ringing me and I'd been trying to get home cause we still had power at that stage power was out everywhere else and we had water we had you know a foot of water in our in bottom our place she saying you gotta come home so I was coming home and then so I couldn't get home I tried to get out through Ryhope and I had to go through water was lapping on the windscreen of the four wheel drive so we tried to get people home and then halfway there the girls from the Art Gallery ring me and said aw we are really scared you gotta come and get us and I said look I'm stuck I can't get out, just stay there ring the police if you get really scared so they rang the police and the police said just stay there you'll be alright so I ended up getting home about had to go all the way back through onto the freeway to get home and there was just you've never seen anything like it in your life it was just amazing even going down the freeway you were doing 40 ks an hour and just the wind and the rain. So I ended up getting home about 9 o'clock it was probably a bit after 9 o'clock and I was getting calls every hour from everywhere like customer service and all over the place it was madness. And I ended up getting and the girls kept ringing me every hour and they finally they ring me about half past eleven and said look were staying here and I said you right and they went yeah we're right and I said look I'll come and get you as soon as I can get you so I think I was getting at two half past two we got we were getting phone calls from Swansea Centre so they water and the alarms were going off and it was just an amazing night. I probably got about 2 hours sleep, and about half past four I was just laying there and I thought I might as well get up. So I went up back to the Art Gallery and the trees were all down over the road so I had to. So we were coming home, so it was about half past four so we ended up going to the art gallery, and there was trees and I don't know if you know the bottom of high school is there. Well that road there was covered in trees, so I had to, I was just dragging trees out with my truck you know just [? getting] through that and finally got to them, and they had spent the night there and there were a couple of, they had a few wines, they must have found some wine out there. They, I don't think they had much sleep, like me, I don't think anyone had much sleep that night. So then started that day we just the whole day, so then I got them out. I arrived at work at Civilake down at the depot I think a bit after five, half past five and there was already stacks of people there and we just, I grabbed a crew and we just cleared trees all day off roads. So spent twelve hours doing that all day and then Saturday night was more calls and we were finding more things as [?we went along]. We then found out that Charlestown library during that night from about eleven til two thirty when the storm, the winds really hit and we found trees on Charlestown library and [? Kilaben] Hall there was [?amazing] just trees. Rathmines park was like a bomb hit it. It was like thirty trees down. It was amazing so basically that was that whole weekend. Saturday and Sunday we were just working clearing trees and I was just working with the working with the Civilake clearing trees and then inspecting all my buildings, then Monday was the same, so I think we I worked something

like fifty hours in the three days so it was a very amazing weekend so.

Rachel Mallaby : So with the art gallery was there much damage?

Mark Wyborn : At the actual art gallery itself except for water damage there was a trees on. There were a few little trees on it but no real structural damage. We were pretty lucky, a few cars there was a few trees on cars and I know Deborah, Debbie Abrahams car was had a tree on it she got a, but no the actual structure was was good.

Rachael Mallaby : And at home?

Mark Wyborn : At home we got pretty lucky no trees down but we got about a foot of water through our downstairs. So I didn't even, poor Kel I didn't even get home til sort of Monday. I was getting home `cause we had no power so I managed to get a generator and she had power but I wasn't home for three days so I finally came home I was getting home at six seven o'clock each at night an I was just going to bed `cause I was shagged.

Rachel Mallaby : And with the clean up, so how long after the weekend?

Mark Wyborn : Aw, the clean up is still going as far as the foreshore still going. Our buildings were now just getting the assessors have been to our buildings. We've got several buildings, Kilaben Hall, Charlestown library which I need to get onto. Yeah, there are still several buildings. Cardiff child care, the bottom of Cardiff child care is right on the storm drain and the whole bottom of the child care just got wiped out, sheds, trees, like a hundred odd, two hundred metres of rubber soft fall is somewhere we don't know where its gone. Sheds are somewhere, so that's just on that one its one hundred and sixty thousand dollars worth of damage just to that. So we're doing that at the moment, so we're now starting to work on the rectification of our buildings now so. We're only still clearing trees we only got the tree cleared off at Kilaben Hall yesterday so it's just going to gone on for months and months.

Rachel Mallaby : And there hasn't been any problems with insurance or?

Mark Wyborn : Not as far as I know. It goes through Julie Williams as far as our concern goes we've, I started to estimate certain jobs now and John Johnson he looks after that side of it then he sends the work down to us and we've been doing that so.

Rachel Mallaby : And during going out in the storm it must have been pretty scary?

Mark Wyborn : Yeah, there was only one time I was scared and that was going around the Esplande. When I'm beside this car doing thirty k an hour and the next thing he just gone. So, `cause he was in a little car, and we were going around `cause they lost the [?lance] that was there and I had to go I was trying to get to Charlestown Square and you couldn't go through the roundabout at Warners Bay because it was a total flood so I was picking my way to go round the back and that's when I rang my boss and said mate I've, I'm scared, I'm getting out of here, I'm getting home. He said right no `cause I didn't think I was gonna get home. I thought I was gonna have to go, stay I was gonna go back

and stay at the art gallery girls but I managed to end get through Ryhope and staying out there so, no it was yeah it was an amazing storm it was seen nothing like it the next day it looked like a bomb site. Like Rathmines and the old there is a hundred year fig tree at Rathmines is gone now so, it was an amazing storm.