

Transcribed by Kerry Mills on 10/05/10 -

RUTH MILLIGAN: This is Ruth Milligan and I'm speaking with Angela Kirkpatrick at Cardiff General Practice on the 13th September 2007 about her experiences with the June long weekend storm of the 8th June 2007.

ANGELA KIRKPATRICK: Okay, basically on the Friday the 8th June, the first time we ever sort of noticed anything, it was a miserable sort of day to begin with, but at lunch time when all of us girls were trying to go out and go to lunch we went out the front and we couldn't get across the road because of the water across the road and that happens quite regularly in Harrison Street and it wasn't anything we were worried about. I did get dreadfully wet when we ran over to the sandwich shop and then um on the way back we were sort of up to our ankles in water and we had our lunch and then by 2 o'clock the rain completely stopped and it stopped for about an hour and all the water drained away. It was just like, oh, okay, rightio then and then it started again. I don't know what time but it started again and it just seemed to get heavier and heavier and there was no let up. It never stopped and even then we weren't really worried about it. I took some photos at lunch time just because we had an old photo of the last time Cardiff flooded and I thought I'd try and get, you know, a similar angle and just see how it compares and about 5 o'clock it was still going and it was still raining really heavy. The first girl goes home at 5 o'clock and she sort of said "is there anything else you want me to do" and I said "no get of here before this weather gets any worse". And then she went home and I was to finish at 5.30 and one of the other girls then finishes at 6. At quarter past five our last patient was in the surgery and I sort of like went out the front and started to take more photos with the camera because then it was still funny.

Then I believe the railway over pass heading out to Glendale had been shut down and I think it had only been shut down since 4.30 in the afternoon. So they had been diverting traffic back up Main Road then back down Harrison Street. So every time a car went past or a truck went past we got a wave of water into the front. And the front of our surgery is all, what is it, it's all tiled and it's quite a big entry and it's quite a big step up so even then weren't worried about it, we just thought, oh well, it's a bit messy. When it was 5.30 and it was still doing that we sort of thought we better hang around and just see how it's going, see what happens. Never thought in a million years it would get as high as it did, and then, there's photos of me playing in the water and we all thought it was hilarious.

And then it started to come up, right to the top stair and my Dad was, like, go and get some towels or something. And it was like, oh okay. So we put some towels down and that did absolutely nothing, it was completely useless and it started to come onto the carpet then. As soon as it hit the carpet then it just absorbed and it just came in. I remember I ran back down the hallway into the kitchen to get some tea towels or something, I don't know, in some vain effort to stop it from coming in. And as I walked out of the kitchen I looked directly into where our toilets are and I could see all the sewerage and the water coming out of the toilets. So I just threw the tea towels over my head and went running back out the front and put my shoes back on [laughs]. So that's when it sort of got a bit

not funny.

RUTH: At what level was the water at this stage.

ANGELA: At that stage it was still just seeping onto the carpet and that was probably about 5.35, 5.40. But once it got to that point, and once it started to creep up the hallway, it just kept going and it happened really quickly and really suddenly after that. By 6 o'clock we were sort of mid chin deep. It just happened really quickly. As soon as we realized what was happening and it wasn't fun any more and it was going to keep coming. There were five of us left there was myself, [?Raka?], who is the other receptionist, and my Dad, Dr Kirkpatrick, Dr Gibbs and Dr Kumal. So we, basically, Dad gave out the orders and we just ran around and put all the computers up because that's our most important data. We put them up sort of on chairs or on the desk but by the time around and did all that, it was still coming up higher. And we looked at where we'd put the stuff and we thought, ohh, that's not going to be high enough, it's still coming. So we went around again and we put the computers up on the highest cupboards we could find because it just didn't stop coming in. And then, I sort of noticed, things started to float around and that's when it started to get very surreal and very Titanic. Very, you know, the bin was floating past and stuff in the storeroom started to come off it's shelf and float around.

At 6 o'clock Dad rang our practice manager just to say, you know, is our insurance up to date. And sort of said look, don't bother to coming over, this is what's happening, we're just going to stay here and see what happens. But in the end Debbie didn't stay there. She lives in Edgeworth and she has a four wheel drive, and they started to come out anyway. At that point we started ringing everybody, ringing our families and just saying we're not going to be home for a little while and we're just going to stay down here, the surgeries flooded. We rang the other doctors just to let them know. And then, we, at that point it was still coming up. It got to sort of knee depth and we started putting more and more things up. Anything we thought might be worth saving we tried to put up. At that point I was standing in the hallway and our liquid nitrogen container fell over and that made the water awfully cold. As if it wasn't cold enough. And that's when it was knee deep. Everything from my knees down was like pins and needles.