

This is Julie Christie interviewing Stephen Woodward at Cardiff about the storms of June 8-11, 2007.

“Steve can you tell us what hapened on the night that the storm had hit?”

“Yes, by about 1am in the morning the storm actually hit. I was sleeping in the front bedroom and it woke me. I could hear noises, so I got up out of bed. We have a blind in the bedroom. I pulled the blind up and peeked out through the window. I could see the wind by the trees, the bushes at the window bending. I could hear noises, crackling, I didn't know what they were.

So anyhow, I went out the back. We have a floodlight out the backyard and I switched it on to have a look to see if there was any damage because we have trees in the backyard but I could still see the three trees standing in the backyard so I came back inside. Then I went back and **laid** down in bed and I said to my wife “I just put the radio on because there was so bad a storm to see if I could hear anything on the radio. I happened to tune into the ABC and I was devastated to hear people trapped here, getting flooded out, asking questions.

I remember distinctively, there was a chap at Charlestown; his wife was at Newcastle Worker's Club. He was minding the children, his children were devastated because they missed Mum, and he wanted to know if he could drive into Newcastle Worker's Club to retrieve the mother and the announcer said “No, stay at home and the wife would be looked after.”

There was another lady, she was at Fassifern Railway Station. She was trapped there because of the floods. They advised her to stay there til help arrived but they didn't let her know when help would arrive but for her safety they said “stay”.

There was a lot of other stories on there which you couldn't believe it was happening. The wind was very severe, it was coming from the east going to the west. So I listened to the radio till as long as the power got cut off at our property. From then there was nothing else I could do but to just go back to bed and just listen.

“How strong was the wind do you think?”

“Well the noise of the wind was very loud. It was like, I watched television shows like Tornado, and it sounded like that. It was very, very hard to describe but it was very, very loud.”

“And were you worried about your house?”

“We have a bedroom in the front bedroom and we have a brick home and you could feel the vibration of the house actually moving but when I said to the wife “You feel the wall”. I said you can feel the vibration of the wind hitting the brick wall out the front and she said “yes, but just stay here because it is dangerous. And I said “get away from the window she said in case tree limbs come in or branches break the window so I said “Okay, right oh, you're the boss”.

“And what about your Neighbours?”

“Ok, next morning I got up and I was up out of bed at about 7:30am. I come out the front, neighbours were still asleep. My neighbours are deaf people. I

communicate with them and help them where I can. They are very good neighbours. I went out the backyard and I was devastated to see there was a tree come down in their backyard. Now the tree, the dimension of the tree would have to be 3 metres in diameter. The heights of the tree would have to be about 35 foot and it had come straight down on their swings, went through the fence of the backyard, went into the back of a reserve. How lucky they were that if the tree had blown the other way, they would have been dead in their bed.

So anyhow, I went back and went over and I rang their doorbell to see if they were alright. When I was talking to them, they didn't even know nothing had even happened. I took them out the back and showed them and they were devastated. We also had damage to our property where a tree branch would come down on our metre box and flooded our metre box out and we didn't know there was any damage to it til the power actually come back on again on our property, at about 8:30 or 9 on Saturday night. When the power came back on again at that time, there was some of the powerpoints that weren't working in the house, we went back to the metre box and there was water pouring through our metre box.

So I got up on the roof there and put towels there to stop the water from coming into the metre box on the roof. I did that and it seemed to have worked and solved the problem for the time being.

“How long do you think that you were without power then?”

“We were without power for 24 hours from about 2:30 until about 9:00 on the Saturday night - because this happened on the Friday night - then from then we didn't have any power because of all the sparks and then everything coming into our metre box til the next morning on the Sunday morning because I switched all the power off because I didn't want to cause a fire. Then I got up on the roof, we still had sprinkling from the rain at that time, got up on the roof, had towels on the roof to stop the water from coming in on the metre box. That did solve the problem. From then, there was not much else I could really do but just wait til the power would come back on because I switched the power on and it did work.”

There wasn't much more I could really do other than to just wait like everybody else. The first thing I did on Saturday morning was come out to our front yard to have a look at the damage to our property. I noticed there was tree branch on our roof. We have two large trees in our front yard. They measure about 3 foot in width both of them, they have branches on them which are old branches. One of the branches they had got broken away and the wind had carried it to a corner of our roof where our metre box is. It broke about eight tiles on our roof. As I mentioned that I got up there on the Sunday morning and put the towels there to stop the leakage from going on the metre box. We didn't actually get our roof fixed until the Thursday, the following week. They came out and prepared the roof.

“Was there much damage to your house inside?”

“Inside there was only a little bit of water damage that actually comes through. We were very, very lucky to our property.