

The Later years

The 1960 Floods

One of the first major happenings for this period was the floods of October 1960. This left Woodbury and Exton in a particularly devastated state. The whole area of Devon was badly hit, and many parts had 2.9 inches of rain in three hours. This was the culmination of a three week period of atrocious weather, during which the village had been flooded four times. Water rushed down Castle Lane and Cottles Lane from the Common, much of it coming from waterlogged

fields. The normally quiet stream that crosses the road at the base of Bonfire Hill turned into a raging torrent, burst its banks and overflowed by the Fire Station. This water tore around by the Church, undermining Mrs Ledmond's cob cottage, which was completely destroyed. This stood where the small car park now is between the White Hart and the Green. Many buildings were flooded in the lower reaches of the village.



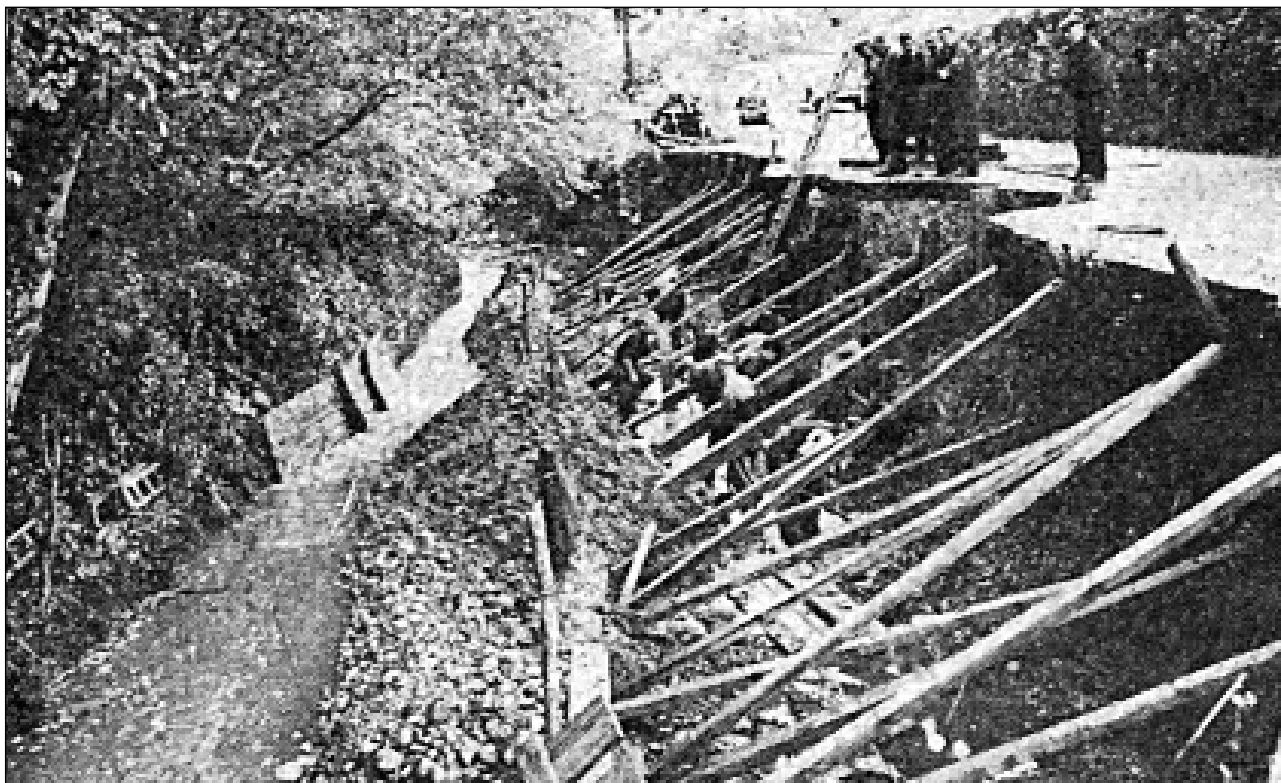
A rather fuzzy picture taken of the torrent of water passing around the Church wall towards the White Hart. There was little time to stand firm!

In Castle Lane the water was the full width of the road, bringing stones and debris with it. The debris eventually blocked drains and culverts further down, which stopped the water going on its proper course.



left:
Sid Marks the Cobbler views the damage to his house Beech Cott, in Gillbrook, which was directly on top of the culvert, and water came up through the floor causing severe damage.

THE LATER YEARS



The road at Ford Water, which had been under repair from the previous week's flood, was more severely damaged and had to be shored up to prevent more of it falling in, due to the constant stream of water.



Things were so severe that the M.P. for Honiton, Mr Robert Mathew (second from right), came to inspect the scene. He is seen here with Devon County Council, St. Thomas Rural District Council and Parish Council officials inspecting the damage.

Both pictures on this page reproduced from newsprint.

M.P. SENT FLOODING S.O.S. TO MINISTER

The Minister was told by Mr HG Stokes, Chairman of the Parish Council, and by fellow councillors, that on Wednesday morning the 19th. October water swept down Church Road, through the White Hart Hotel and into the main village road. Houses in Gillbrook were flooded again as the culvert which runs at the back of them overflowed.

Mr Roy Medlen, licensee of the White Hart described the floods of this week as more frightening than last time. Among others who were seriously

affected were Mr Norman Joy, Fred Goodwin and Mrs Skinner, all of whom were flooded recently.

County Police diverted traffic over Woodbury Common, when the second flood again damaged Ford Water, making it unsafe.

Early on Friday, (21st. October), DCC workmen erected a sandbag barricade along 50 yards of the bank of the culvert towards Gillbrook, to protect houses which had already been flooded four times in three weeks. After his visit, Mr Mathew sent a telegram to the Minister of Housing asking for authority for work to be started which would prevent a recurrence of the flooding.

TWENTIETH CENTURY WOODBURY

Exton also received a pasting at the hands of the elements during this three week period, and the old cob Church of St. Andrews was washed away by flood waters on 30th. September 1960. People who live in Exton will well know that all water that passes through Woodbury village ultimately also passes through Exton before it discharges into the River Exe, plus more that is picked up en route.

The Church was totally destroyed, and an appeal for £11,000 was raised for its rebuilding. This unique building, which had a thatched roof as well as its cob walls, had been used as a tithe barn since the 15th Century. It had been given for use as a Church by Lady Rolle in 1864, and had become an invaluable part of village life.

St. Andrews Church Exton before disaster struck.



After the event a sorry sight.

Five hundred years of life, which by an Act of God and the elements, was consigned to history in one day!

God moves in mysterious ways!

Picture courtesy the Express & Echo.

The new St. Andrews is seen here under construction in 1963.

The old cottages seen in the picture above, which belonged to the Rolle Estate, were demolished. The land on which they stood was given by the estate for the re-building of the Church.

