

STORM DAMAGE TO MAKER WITH RAME INSTITUTE FEB 2014

On the night of Tuesday 6th February three critical factors coincided to give rise to the most destructive storm to hit Kingsand since the great storm of January 1824 which caused £6,000 worth of damage. A south-easterly gale and a spring tide with low pressure combined to smash windows and doors on the Cleave and to do serious damage to the Institute and Clock Tower.

The Parish Council put the Emergency Plan into operation and residents of threatened properties were evacuated to the Community Hall where casualties were attended to. The hall remained open on the following day when sandwiches and coffee were provided for the emergency services. On that same morning, Wednesday, the extent of the damage was apparent. Many houses had suffered ingress from the sea and were boarded up to prevent further damage and to make them secure. One slate-hung house at Norr Rock was particularly badly damaged and the pavement outside was barricaded off because of the danger of falling slates.



Serious damage by far was sustained by the Institute which was left in a very critical state. A hole had been punched in the east wall, and the outer wall supporting the lower balcony, and the balcony itself washed away leaving the base of the clock tower and the basement completely exposed.

Immediate action was taken to shore up and stabilise the building but a further high tide accompanied by high seas on the night of Friday 14th caused a breach in one of the walls supporting the base of the tower which was left in a perilous condition.

The trustees had to react speedily, not only to stabilise this iconic building but also to demonstrate to the insurers that in the event of it collapsing we took all the steps possible to prevent such a catastrophe. Not to have done so would have jeopardised any subsequent claim. On Monday the 10th the village was visited by the Prime Minister who inspected damaged properties and met the owners.

A 'cherry-picker' removed the dangerously hanging railings, pillars and slates. Work had to be continued throughout the night to save the building. Gunitite, a mixture of cement, sand and a quick-setting agent, was applied under pressure to seal and protect the damaged masonry; a process which continued for several days.

The Institute is unique, not only because of its distinctive architecture, but also because of the rock from which it is built. The red felsite is an intrusive volcanic rock which only occurs at Watergate quarry and Sandway in Kingsand, and also out at the Eddystone reef. Fresh supplies are unobtainable. Consequently the builders are trying to recover all the debris from the beaches. The building has a Grade 2 listing. English Heritage, who have already visited the site and approved of the necessary repairs, insist that such repairs are made using as much of the original materials as possible.



After what has been a very tense two weeks the Institute appears to have been saved and repairs can commence. Praise is due to the contractors (Celtic Construction of Widegates) who have performed miracles, working between the tides, sometimes in the most atrocious conditions and John Grimes, the consultant engineer, who, despite the danger involved, personally directed the application of the Gunitite in the basement. Last but not least thanks are due Cornwall Councillor George Trubody who has been tireless in his efforts to coordinate all the agencies involved and spending countless hours in Kingsand resolving many problems.

We have already received several generous donations and a Facebook Just Giving web page is in the process of being set up. The Village Store has kindly offered to accept donations on our behalf.

Tony Carne, Trustee, Maker with Rame Institute.
19 February 2014