

HAVEN QUAY and Spit Breached by Storm and Tide

"Christchurch Times," Sat. October 27, 1945

A WASH in the gale-driven spring tides, the highest for seven years, Sandhills isthmus connecting Haven Quay with the mainland has been breached. Three feet wide on Wednesday morning, the breach is growing, and at two other places similar breaks through seem imminent.

The Christchurch Times forecast the likelihood of Haven Quay becoming an island some weeks ago, when the advisability of the Borough Council's "in committee" negotiations for the purchase of the Quay was reviewed. It is understood that although no formal contract has been signed between the Council and Messrs. Devenish, a written offer of purchase has been accepted.

A Christchurch Times reporter had to use thigh waders to reach Haven Quay some time after high water on Wednesday morning. Here is his description of the scene:—

"Before leaving the car park, which was partially submerged, waves could be seen breaking over the sand spit. I waded out to the duck-boards, which are supposed to afford a dry passage to the Haven, and found some of them damaged and nearly all submerged. All of the isthmus known as Sandhills had been washed by the sea at the peak of the tide—debris, uprooted vegetation, and channels cut by the receding water in the loose sand had changed the whole appearance of the place. Half way along the duck-boards a breach in the spit had occurred. This was two or three feet wide and the waters of the flooded harbour were running through it, or being penned and forced back as the waves rushed in from the sea. At two other places— one of them at the edge of the Quay wall—the continual beat of the sea threatened further breaches. The firm top soil, reinforced by bushes and pine trees, is breaking up the length of the spit. When it goes, only sand remains. Two old trunks stood like sentinels over the desolation, balanced on the tip of their roots from which soil to the depth of three , or four feet had been washed away. At the Haven House Inn, it is the highest tide remembered for seven years. This morning water lapped at the back door, and a tidal mark disclosed that not only the quay, but the Inn building itself, was for a time an island."

Other reports indicate a brighter aspect of the storm. Fishermen say that the Council's new groyne now under construction on the eastward end of Mudeford beach has made up considerably during the rough weather, and they believe that when it is completed the beach will begin to regain its former proportions. They attribute this to the fact that Bournemouth's groyne at Hengistbury Head is now silted up and spilling sand which is swept round to augment Mudeford beach.

STORM DAMAGE

The storm which raged here during the week is one of the worst for years. The spring tides held up by the gale in the Channel caused heavy flooding throughout the district. From Christchurch the meadows north and south of the town were white with an almost unbroken sheet of water. Boatmen on Wednesday morning were salvaging sunken yachts at Christchurch Quay, which was flooded to the depth of a foot, and it is believed that some structural damage has been done to properties in Mudeford.

Hants and Dorset bus services to Lymington were temporarily disconnected early on Wednesday morning when a large tree blew across Hinton Wood Avenue, blocking the traffic. A way for single line traffic was soon cleared by Corporation workmen and the road was open again by the afternoon.

High seas prevented workmen from continuing with the Council's groyne under construction at Mudeford beach, and Burton people coming to Christchurch had difficulty in negotiating Stoney

Lane, which was flooded at peak tide periods.

Telephone wires have also been reported down in the Hurn district. At 6.25 a.m. on Wednesday, Charles Leslie Bennett, of 6, Norwood Place, Pokesdown, was driving a van in Hurn Road in the direction of Christchurch. Near Blackwater, a dead tree crashed on the bonnet of the car, injuring him and his passenger, Stanley Jeamond, of 326, Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth. Both were taken to Boscombe Hospital, where Jeamond was admitted. His condition is stated to be "fairly satisfactory." Both were employed by the B.O.A.C., in whose van they were driving.