

Florence Rudge interviewed by the MP Bernard Braine about her experience of the flood on Canvey Island. She avoided the rising tide by standing on a table in her bungalow until she was rescued on Tuesday - three days after the flood hit the island.

'I woke up, heard a funny noise, and wondered what it was. I got out of bed, and when I looked outside, I was in the sea! Well I jumped out quickly and got a few clothes on. And of course the water was coming up and up and up. I jumped on the big settee first, and it got up to my chest. I thought well I've got to get up on something higher than this. Well this table was floating round the room. And I got hold of the beam and pulled it along to the fireplace. And threw myself across it. And of course the water was washing over me then. So I got on my feet and stood up. And there I stood until late Sunday. I was so exhausted by standing, I tried to get down on the table to sit. But I lost my balance and my feet and legs went in the water. I sat like that until I was rescued on Tuesday.

*On Tuesday?*

On Tuesday, about four o'clock.

*But you must have been there for three days?*

Yes, I was there for three days.

*But did you have anything to eat?*

No, I couldn't get to anything. I was in the water, I couldn't get at anything!

*Nothing to drink?*

No, nothing at all. It was drink I wanted. The milk was on the table. If I thought if I could only get that. But I couldn't. And I had a nice little bottle of whiskey my daughter brought me home from Ireland.

*Where was that?*

That was in the dressing table drawer, in the bedroom.

*Yes, that's the place to keep it!*

Yes, well I couldn't get it. So I had nothing at all until they got me to hospital.

*But you were conscious the whole time?*

Well— no, I kept losing myself. But I knew I'd got to keep my senses otherwise I should've gone into the water. I fought against sleep and I fought against unconsciousness.

*The interview with Florence Rudge was broadcast on the BBC in 1953 [[SA 1/656/1](#)]*