

Malcolm MacGregor describes escaping his family's farm in Lee-over-Sands. He helped row his family to safety, avoiding fences, haystacks, and telegraph poles in the water. His sister's faithful Exmoor pony swam behind the boat.

We had a tool shed alongside the bungalow. I got a big pair of wire-cutters, and we were equipped. But what gear we'd got on was only a jacket– or a jumper and a jacket– and long waders. In no time, we were over the top of our waders, cutting our way through er, three fences, we cut our way through. And we managed to row past where it was roaring across the road. There was all sorts of things. Haystacks– where they'd come from I don't know. Telegraph poles, all that sort of thing. They were hitting the ground and pitch-poling with the force of water. And all the time, we were trying to keep our head to wind, and edge our way across to get to the land. If we'd have let her go, we'd have gone down to Jaywick in a few seconds. And the pony, my sister kept calling out to her, and she swam behind us.

The interview with Malcolm McGregor was recorded in 2019 by Carol Dawson as part of the 'Tides of Tendring' oral history project [SA 84/5/1]