

**Reg Stevens, Canvey Urban Council's Engineer and Surveyor at the time of the flood, describes how he tried to alert residents to the threat of the flood and maintain communications outside Canvey.**

The first concern was to try and make as much noise as possible in order to get people awake at this ghastly hour. At the time there was a howling gale and snow flurries in the wind. It was really very very cold. And I asked that the sirens which were used during the war as air raid sirens and later used to call out the fire brigade during daylight hours, that they be sounded, and using the old wailing note of the wartime air raid. This was done, but again, the penetration of this noise into the wind was comparatively small. So I asked them then to fire some ?runes.

Very shortly after this, the telephone exchange went out of operation. The telephone operator had stayed sitting in water 'til his equipment ceased to function due to the depth of the floodwater. He really was a hero. We were then without any communication until the ambulance driver, who had also been called out, came to me and said that during the week before, his ambulance had been fitted with a radio. And eventually I was able to get a message to Bernard Braine, our Member of Parliament.

*The interview with Reg Stevens was broadcast on Breeze FM in 1993 as part of the programme 'The Great Tide', produced by Anton Jarvis [SA 24/827/1]*