



Nationally most of the forest trees split with the frost, the ice was 11 ins thick on the Thames and most of the birds died.

He then went on to describe the 'terrible tempest both of watter and wind' that struck on 26 November 1703.

It began on Friday with rain, which caused a great flood before it ceased. Towards the evening the rain abated and the wind arised and so continued, rising higher and higher until about midnight, at which time it was so high the like was never known. The noise of it was like continual thunder, which did awaken all of us out of sleep. And feeling our beds shake under us and hearing our houses creak over us, none that was able to rise could lie on their beds. About four hours before day our houses began to break and in one hour's time a sad distraction there was. But none could go forth of their houses nor rise from their places to see what hurt was done because of the darkness and the danger for four or five hours, but sat, mourning, one with another and wishing for the day. But when the day was come, that we could look forth, lo, a woeful sight to behold. To see heaps of healm at our doors, the streets filled with thatch and tile of our houses: to see some houses blown down, many uncovered, and all in general torn and broken, more or less. To see the churches defaced, the towers was shaken, the windows broken, the lead blown off and the battlements thrown down. To see abundance of trees, especially elms, lying in the ways and in the fields with their roots turned upwards: a multitude of apple trees and many whole orchards wholly laid down. To see the corn mows uncovered and blown about the bartons, the hay mows thrown down and carried into the ditches. A woeful sight, indeed: enough to make anyone fear and tremble. To see everything that was not blown down, the hedges and trees and everything moveable, to quiver and shake. To see nothing but ruin and destruction on every side. If you look to the north, it was all laid down before you: if to the south, it was all coming towards you. If you look to the east, all was flying from you: if to the west it was all ready to fall upon you; with a great roaring over your heads and round about you. Thus it was with us, but with many more much worse. At the same time there was a very great loss at sea, both of ships and of men, and also in seaport towns in houses and in goods. The wind continuing hard on Saturday morning, it caused the sea to come in with such great force and strength, that on a sudden it filled all the channels, threw down the walls and broke down the banks, so that it overspread very much dry land; whereby those that inhabited on the borders thereof, having received as much hurt by the wind as others had, they received much more by the water. Their ground was spoiled, their cattle was drowned, their corn and hay was carried away and the greatest part of it was lost. Their gates was unhinged, their doors broke open, their goods swimmid in their houses and they themselves was in great danger, their houses being full of water at the bottom and blown off at the top. Some of them which was within was fain to stand on the walls of

**A true report of certaine wonderfull overflowinges
of Waters, now lately in Summerset-shire, Norfolke, and other
places of England: destroying many thoufands of men, women,
and children, overthrowing and bearing downe
whole townes and villages, and drowning
infinite numbers of sheepe and
other Cattle.**



A graphic portrayal of another 17th century flood in Somerset.

End of an Era

"Not the money in it like there used to be...
Why there used to be a hundred or more acres out there
All grown up, a proper factory we had here
The whole of Kingsbury was at it, but that died off
Like the coal coming up the river in barges
Then the railway went, and then the mill packed up
And then the milk factory. My father used to bring hay
From Hambridge over in a boat, in time of flood
Cut it with a hayknife to feed the cattle
End of an era now, we're on the building
Laying blocks at Broadwindsor, new thatched cottages
Course they want the willow hurdles for the gardens
Privacy and all that, but we just grubbed the old bed out
Demand is higher than ever
Suppose another few years time we'll have a grant
To put them back in again. Just a few bundles left
Taking them to Bournemouth for the blind
They can at least see the future"

*Brian Howard talking about Westmoor leaning over a fence
By Thorney Mill, August 1995.*

Thorney Mill

Water Last mill on the Parrett or the first,
Wheel drips if you are coming up stream
Slow revolutions with a barge. Mill pool
Fluid energy held back swirling dark and
Tapped, only half controlled deep. The wheel
The river's arc begins to pulse house covered
Pulling and pursued, a vast force in moss like
Runs through the building, judders some old
Turns stone, turns wheat into flour Japanese
Dark-hidden and silent, unleashed shrine.
The power of the water, river's voice
Grinding grain, vast cogs intermesh
Slow majesty of such machinery
Delight and danger, trapdoors
Gape, strong arm of the river
Flexing augers and hoists
Musty hessian, West
Of England sacks
Grainbins
Flour
Everywhere pale hanging
Early morning mist, white faces peer
Cough and splutter, the vibrancy
A gamelan orchestra rippling out across the moor..