

**LIZ BONNIN:** Hi I'm Liz Bonnin. We're looking at physical geography. And on such a glorious day like this here at Seven Sisters on the south coast of England, it's hard to imagine it raining so much that the rivers burst their banks and flood your home town.

But that's exactly what happened in Somerset back in 2014. In what were the worst floods for over 100 years. Amongst the causes were things that you'll study in your geography lessons. Lots of rainfall, obviously, and a lack of dredging, which means managing the rivers - unblocking our waterways so that they're clear and wide enough for water to keep flowing.

Now in this clip we find Matt Baker and Tom Heap going back to the affected areas a year after the floods, to see how people were recovering and to find out what was being done to make sure it wouldn't happen again...

**MATT BAKER: Somerset. An ancient, agricultural country. A landscape defined by its geology. From Cheddar Gorge, to the slate and sandstone of the Quantocks.**

But it's the beautiful low lying Somerset Levels that have gained the most attention in recent years. But sadly for all the wrong reasons...

*NEWS REPORTER: Torrential rain and 70 mile an hour winds dumped tonnes of extra water on a landscape that's already sodden.*

**MATT BAKER: The water swept the villages to the east of Taunton. Today, I'm in Burrowbridge to see what's happened since. I'm revisiting Jeff Miller. A farmer who's land was ruined by the devastating effect of the water.**

The last time I was here, Jeff had moved all of his cattle away from his flooded farm. He was left guarding his home with a ring of round bales that went all the way around the farm house.

**Totally cut off, the only way in was on foot. And I brought some much needed supplies.**

*FLASHBACK: There's your groceries.*

*JEFF: Thank you very much indeed, that's ideal. Thank you.*

*MATT BAKER: Pair of size nine –*

*JEFF: They're very much in demand and very welcome at this stage.*

**MATT BAKER:** Now then, Jeff. How you doing?

**JEFF:** Hello, Matt. Good to see you again.

**MATT BAKER:** Good to see you. What a difference!

**JEFF:** Yes. Yes.

**MATT BAKER:** Are those the same wellies?

**JEFF:** Those are the wellies you brought from the pub for me Matt, thank you very much indeed. They've done me well.

**MATT BAKER:** Good lad. Excellent Well, listen, I honestly can't believe the difference.

**JEFF:** No, in fact, you know, come and have a look, we've made some big improvements.

**MATT BAKER:** Jeff's land was under water for three months. It had a huge impact on the farm's income.

**JEFF:** Had we not had the floods, I would have taken three cuts of grass off of this at least. 35 acres about 10 bales an acre it would have been about 1000 bales of silage. I have lost a years' production.

**MATT BAKER:** And it's not just producing the feed for the winter's time I mean, grass really is the key to your business, isn't it?

**JEFF:** It is. Because I produce, you know, I've got a suckler cow herd. And so beef is the main enterprise and if I can produce as much of that as possible from grassland it keeps my cost down. It means I'm not going out buying expensive concentrates and if I feed better quality grass, I'll get better quality meat.

**MATT BAKER:** What a remarkable job you've done here. I mean look at this luscious green field. I mean this is a field of grass that any farmer would be proud of.

**JEFF:** Initially, we had to go through with a subsoiler and let, you know, let some air into the soil. And having put the grass seed in up it came, and then we had to put this special soil conditioners etc to get it working correctly.

**MATT BAKER:** Things may be getting back to normal on Jeff's farm. But what about on the rest of the levels? Tom's been finding out.

**TOM HEAP:** Somerset was by no means the only part of the UK to suffer from last winter's floods, but it was under water for the longest.

*TOM HEAP: FLASHBACK: What are you hoping to be able to see or do today?*

*NEIL CRADDOCK: I'd like to think that the water would all disappear but obviously that ain't going to happen at all. So, I think we're just going to see a very sad scene.*

**TOM HEAP:** Last February local businessman Neil Craddock's warehouse was only accessible by boat. He faced losing his livelihood.

*FLASHBACK: So we're going into the first floor of the building, are we?*

*NEIL CRADDOCK: Into the first floor where it's the only dry part left.*

*TOM HEAP: Yeah, so everything down here is...*

*NEIL CRADDOCK: Everything below there is under water.*

*TOM HEAP: Can you survive?*

*NEIL CRADDOCK: We'll, we'll have to rebuild.*

**TOM HEAP:** And rebuild is exactly what Neil did. Using his own money, and with the support of his staff and clients, he was back in his factory by April.

How long and how difficult was it for you to get back to this?

**NEIL CRADDOCK:** Very, very difficult indeed.

**TOM HEAP:** Yeah.

**NEIL CRADDOCK:** I mean we had to physically strip the factory go to another factory, rebuild what parts we could, scrap what we couldn't, then come back here, rebuild the factory, wire it and get producing again.

**TOM HEAP:** How much did it cost you?

**NEIL CRADDOCK:** I really don't know off hand. It's a huge amount of money but should think I've had to put a quarter of a million pounds into it. Just to get ourselves up and going.

**TOM HEAP:** What does that mean to you?

**NEIL CRADDOCK:** Well, effectively my retirement I've already spent. So, I've got to start earning it again now.

*WOMAN: FLASHBACK: Why was this not done ages ago? Why have you only started doing this now?*

**TOM HEAP:** Ian was one of the many who blamed the Somerset floods on local waterways not being dredged and pushed hard to change that. He said that campaign and the media attention that followed yielded real results. Starting last March, around five miles of the two main rivers, the Parrett and Tone, were finally dredged.

**NEIL CRADDOCK:** I think the contractors have done a brilliant job, personally if you look at the profile of the river now compared to the way it was, there is absolutely no comparison whatsoever. Today's it's a proper waterway. Earlier, it was a hardly a stream really. And you can actually see flow of water. It looks like it's operating probably as a real waterway.

**TOM HEAP:** So if we have a week of rain and you look at the forecast and there's another week coming up, will you be confident?

**NEIL CRADDOCK:** We're all fairly nervous, Tom. Because of what's happened previously. But we have had actually a week of rain, you know, a few weeks ago and I've seen the way that the river has handled it and I'm really quite confident.

**TOM HEAP:** The dredging of these rivers was seen as a victory by the locals. And the work didn't stop there. Temporary pumping sites have been upgraded. Major roadworks have been carried out and there's also been extensive repairs to defences like flood banks and spillways.

**LIZ BONNIN:** So as you can see, trying to stop flooding involves a lot of effort, building projects and expense. But those people who were effected in Somerset would definitely agree that it's all worth it.