

THE 2014 SOMERSET FLOODS

Laura Zaky & Jason Bryant

From December 2013 to March 2014 England was struck by the worst winter weather in 200 years. Somerset was more affected than anywhere else in the Country, especially on and around the Levels and Moors. Volunteer coordinator and photographer Laura Zaky and freelance photographer Jason Bryant witnessed and recorded the rising tide of devastation that swept over the hitherto green fields of Somerset. The lives of thousands were disrupted and for many there was deep distress as livelihoods and homes were submerged beneath the waters. Yet amid all the chaos and anguish Laura and Jason witnessed great acts of kindness,

humanity, bravery and humour which showed the strength and resilience of the indigenous population and revealed the generosity of countless people and businesses both locally and from further afield.

This book begins when it came apparent that the waters were still rising and people needed help. Laura and Jason have selected over 300 images to present a visual record of the highs and lows of this tumultuous period, starting with the visit of Prince Charles to Muchelney on 4 February, when Somerset's plight became fixed in the Nation's consciousness, through to the end when, finally, the waters began to recede and some sort of normality returned.

This book is a unique portrayal not only of the floods themselves but of the tireless behind-the-scenes efforts made to bring aid and succour to embattled communities.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Laura Zaky was educated at Millfield School and she now lives in Street. Laura is a published and freelance photographer. Laura got involved initially with the FLAG action group on Facebook because she had friends in Fordgate. This quickly turned into crisis management and logistics working with many amazing people. Laura thus had a key insight and opportunity to document the work of the relief bodies.

Jason Bryant born in and raised in Shepton Mallet, is a freelance photographer who since 1997 has worked for both regional and national newspapers. Jason covered the floods from the start to the finish and managed to help and document the evacuation of cattle from West Yeo Farm in Moorland. At first he wore wellies, then waders and ended up in a immersion suit as the flood waters rose. During a trip to Moorland at the height of the floods Jason tripped on an underwater pipe and destroyed a Canon EOS 1DX camera. "Some you win and some you lose and some lost a lot more than me," says Jason.

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Royal Marines were deployed to help reinforce flood defences.



Above: Avon and Somerset Police head to Muchelney.

Left: A diver from Street sub aqua club takes a dip at Burrowbridge.

Below: The view from Burrow Mump.



Left: The evacuation of cattle from James Winslade's West Yeo Farm.



Example of a double-page spread.