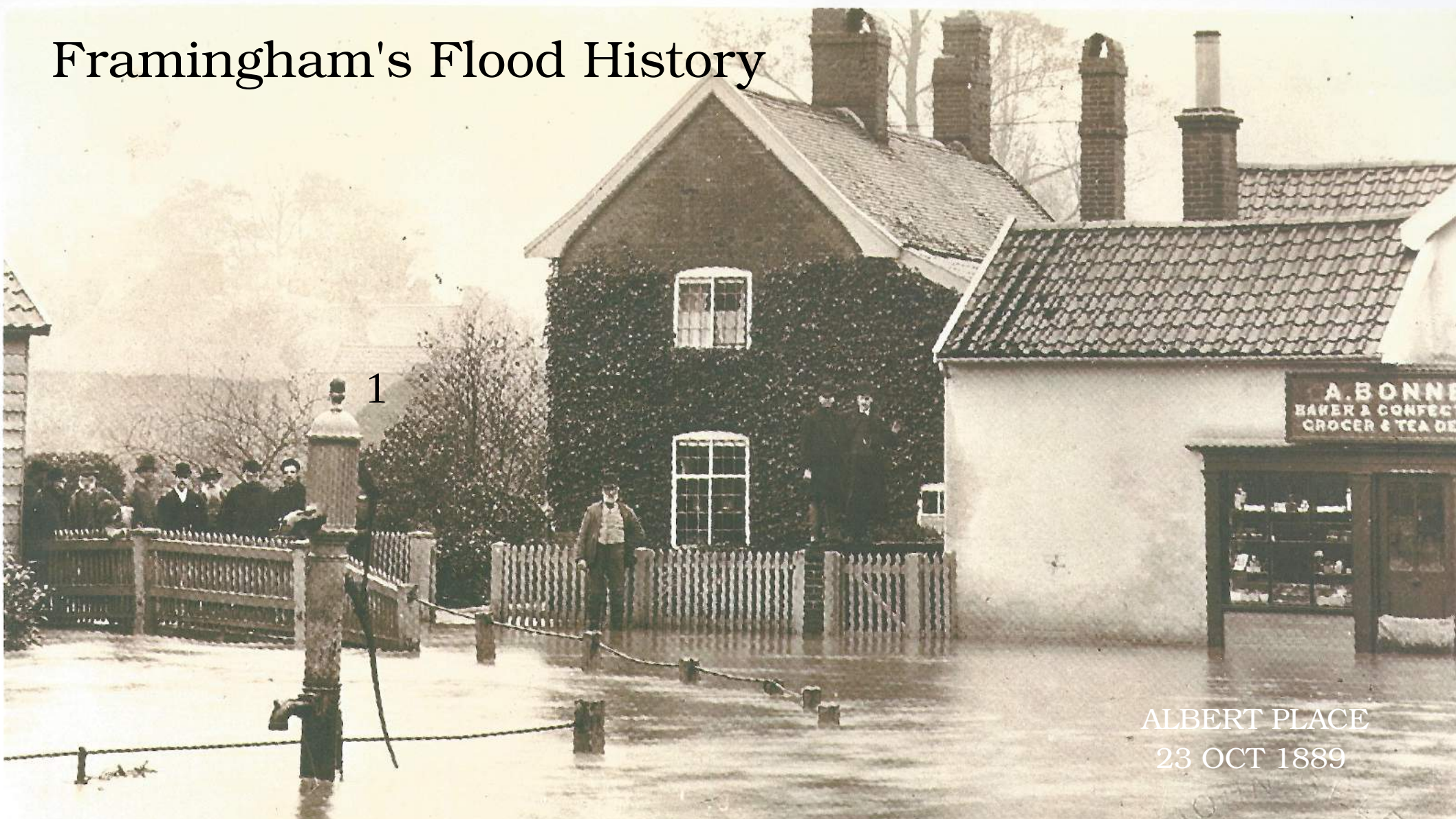


Framingham's Flood History



1

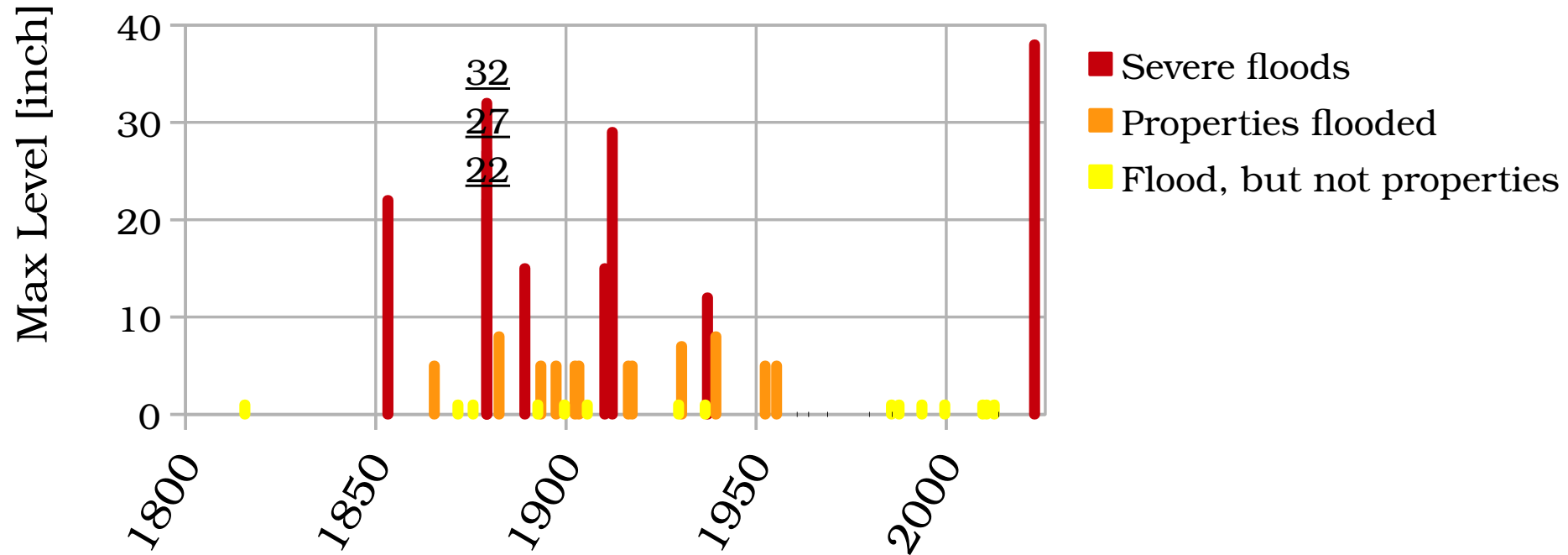
A. BONNE
BAKER & CONFECTIONER
CROCKER & TEA DEPARTMENT

ALBERT PLACE
23 OCT 1889

Framlingham Flood History

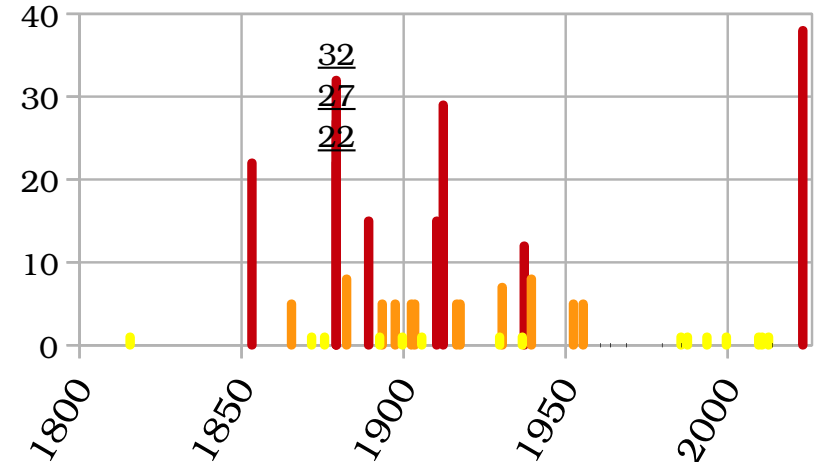
Severe (red) levels at Riverside Spring Pump : from news reports & photos

Other levels : purely nominal



Fram's Flood History since 1850s

- 21 floods into properties, incl. 9 severe
 - 16 others with no mention of flooded properties
 - in one year 3 severe floods (1879)
 - Babet (2023) the deepest yet



- Long pauses
 - early 1950s to 2023
 - 1614 flood : "More than 2 centuries are said to have elapsed between that and the next (1853)" [Fram Weekly News, 1910]
- Reliable data? yes and no
 - multiple sources carefully searched, mostly newspaper reports & photo archives
 - severe max flood levels are based on measurements or hearsay of measurements
 - many thanks to John Bridges for his research and discussions (but, any errors or omissions are mine alone)

Babet

Photo credit: John Bridges



ALBERT PLACE
16:36 20 OCT 2023

More information

- 5-page appendix: abridged source data and more info, e.g:
 - 1903 & 1930:
 - along Riverside, the river ran backwards towards the Mere
 - 1882:
 - 28th Oct floods after: 1¾" in 2 days, 3½" that week, 6" that month*
but still no reports of flooded properties
 - obstructions had been thoroughly cleared since disastrous 1879 floods

- Unabridged source data:

<https://homefarmparham.co.uk/history/Fram/2024HistoryFramFloods.ods>

* Oct 1882 daily rainfall records at Mount Pleasant, Fram.

A little less intense than Babet rainfall: over 4" in 3 days up to 20 Oct 2023 (at Charsfield)

Framlingham Flood History

Year	Date	Severity	Rel. depth	Selected quotes	Sources
Legend					
		H		High: Properties flooded and >12" in the streets	
		M		Med: Properties flooded	
		L		Low: No mention of properties flooded	
			X=Jul 1879		
1614	21 Jan 1614			"In reference to this stream, as it flows through the town at the western extremity of the Market-place, we find on p60 of the first Register Book of Framlingham the following entry:- ... ther was sutch a water at the Mill Bridge, as the like as neuer seene in any man's tyme then lyueyng..."	[FF24] [Green1834: p10] [Green1895 p84]
1815		L		Flooding around the mere	[SCC24]
				"As far back as the year 1614 a flood is recorded at the same spot [Albert Place] in "The Guide to Framlingham." but more than two centuries are said to have elapsed between that and the next one (1853)."	[FWN 3 Dec 1910]
1853	25 Apr 1853	H	X - 10"	"At eight p.m. the Mere presented a sea of water. When the inundation was at its height, it stood above the centre of the arch of the Mill Bridge, an event which far exceeded anything of the kind then known within the last 75 years."	[FF24] [Green1895 p84]
1859	3 Sep 1859			Publication of [FWN] started	
1865	24 Aug 1865	M		"Tempest.—On Tuesday afternoon last, a very heavy tempest passed over to the south of Framlingham. A water spout burst near Mr. Borrett's residence, and the farm premises opposite Broadwater were completely inundated. Two cottages were filled with water and the family had to keep upstairs until the storm was over. Parham low meadows were entirely under water; and such a circumstance in month of August has not been known within the memory of man."	[FWN 26 Aug] [ChG15]
				"A Flood! Such was the heavy fall of rain on Wednesday night and Thursday morning last, that the Mere was completely flooded and presented such a sight as rarely seen in winter! ...The road at Saxtead Bottoms was quite impassable to pedestrians for several hours. ... Such a circumstance in the midst of harvest operations is not remembered by the oldest inhabitant of Framlingham. "	
1871		L		"That year the Mere was in flood to a great extent and there were 18 acres of water. Several of the young people took up boating."	[FWN 7 Nov 1936]
1875	16 Jul 1875	L		"The heavy rains of Wednesday and Thursday must have done considerable damage to the hay. ... Our Mere is now flooded (Friday) by the rains, a sight scarcely ever seen in July by any of the inhabitants."	[FWN 17 Jul]
1875	22 Jul 1875	L		"The Mere, by the rains of the previous Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, was flooded on Thursday morning to a higher point than reached in the past winter. The hay crop...has been floating away day by day. Such a flood that had not been known for 22 years. The fine weather on Thursday abated the water several inches."	[FF24] [FWN 24 Jul]
1879	21 Jul 1879	H	X	" The July flood exceeded 1853 by 10 inches. No question that it was through neglecting to keep clear the course of the river. Read's fellmonger's yard [Tanyard Court] deluged to 18 inches by noon and at night 3 feet. H Fairweather [Bridge Cottage], house and premises flooded to a depth from a foot to three feet. The dribbling stream of late years...has allowed us to grow careless in the matter of keeping the channel at its proper width and depth."	[FF24] [FWN 26 Jul] [Green1895 p84]
				"Colonel Barne, M.P., ... owing to the line being flooded, was unable to keep his appointment," (Thu 24 Jul)	
				"The holidays should have begun on Saturday last, but owing to the floods last week interfering with railway communications they were postponed until this week. " (2 Aug 1879)	
1879	17 Sep 1879	H	= 1853	Similar floods [to 1853] occurred in July and September 1879. "ladders and carts had to be employed to liberate Mr. Barker and Mr. Howard from their dwellings. The People's Hall [United Free Church] had about ten inches of water in the lower portion. Mrs. Pinfold and Mrs. Catchpole were flooded ten inches Mr. F. Read's fellmongering premises were under water to the depth of three to four feet. "	[FF24] [EAFFC: (Ips J, 20 Sep)]
				[I suspect the following quotes relate to the subsequent week]	
				"A severe thunderstorm occurred periodically during the night. The river began to overflow the following morning and stood about 4 or 5 inches on the path near the Spring Pump. Fairfield Road was a complete river for nearly a quarter of a mile and about 2 feet deep. The streets of the town were washed clear of silt. The Post office, the Peoples Hall and all the houses on the banks of the river were inundated to a depth of 12 to 18 inches. A brick bridge on the north of the town was carried away."	
1879	24 Sep 1879	H	X - 5"	"Having had as recently as last week a protracted tempest, which converted our Mere into an extensive lake, and swelled the river to the brim, none of the inhabitants anticipated that another and a larger one would follow in its wake within a week's time. " ...by 11 o'clock the highest point was reached, registering just five inches lower than the flood of July ...A brick bridge, close by the Little Lodge was completely carried away by the force of the torrent early in the morning and the vehicular traffic to Countess Wells and Lodge Farm have to be carried on by the Brabbling Green route."	[FWN 27 Sep] [Green1895 p84] [Lambert's Family Almanac]
				" there were only three weeks without rain or snow from Michaelmas, 1878, to Michaelmas, 1879. "	
1881				"The winter of the same year [1879] was noted for a great flood, as was that of 1881. These were very devastating."	[FWN 14 Nov 1936]

Framlingham Flood History

Year	Date	Severity	Rel. depth	Selected quotes	Sources
1882	1 Oct 1882		0.04"		
1882	2 Oct 1882		0.02"		
1882	5 Oct 1882		0.07"		
1882	7 Oct 1882		0.16"		
1882	11 Oct 1882		0.20"		
1882	12 Oct 1882		0.73"		
1882	13 Oct 1882		0.04"		
1882	16 Oct 1882		0.40"		
1882	18 Oct 1882		0.03"		
1882	19 Oct 1882		0.19"		
1882	21 Oct 1882		0.85"		
1882	22 Oct 1882		0.03"		
1882	24 Oct 1882		0.81"		
1882	26 Oct 1882		0.19"		
1882	27 Oct 1882		1.10"		
1882	28 Oct 1882		0.66"		
1882	30 Oct 1882		0.35"		
1882	31 Oct 1882		0.02"		
1882	1-31 Oct 1882		5.89"	The rainfall here in the past month was quite as much as we knew what to do with in our heavy land district ; and although the fall is excessive, it is not near as much as reported in other parts of the county I herewith beg to hand you a copy of my register :— In the corresponding month last year the fall here was 3.46 inches.—I am, &c, REUBEN WHITEHEAD, Mount Pleasant, Framingham. November 1st, 1882.	[FWN 4 Nov]
1882	28 Oct 1882	M	X – 24"	"We have had a narrow escape of another disastrous flood. Had it not been for a partial clearance of the river a repetition of all this would assuredly have been experienced." "In the forenoon of Saturday the cottages at the Brooks [Brook Lane/Vyces Road] were flooded through what might be justly termed culpable negligence of the proper persons in not clearing the way for the stream just below this part... The Mere was quickly converted into a lake of fine expanse of waters; and by noontime the water overflowed the wall of the river by the Post Office, and towards night the road by the People's Hall [United Free Church] was impassable... All along the course of the river the banks were overflowed, and Mr. Clarke's Nursery Garden was under water some feet . Several cottages were also inundated. Grave fears were entertained that the water would reach the great height of '80 but it was apparent that the work of the Surveyors and other owners in clearing the river had its desired effect, for the water was kept down two feet entirely through this work. [The references to '1880' are probably mistaken references to 1879. No reference to a Fram flood can be found in the FWN during 1880, except letters in Jan and May 1880 about the 1879 flood. An 1882 letter talks only of '2 former occasions'.]	[FF24] [FWN 4 Nov]
1889	23 Oct 1889	H	X – 17" =15" ∴ X = 32"	"Meanwhile "The Brooks" [Brook La/Vyces Rd] ... rose so rapidly that the cottages ... were submerged some eighteen inches before breakfast time ; and articles of furniture were to that depth in water. ...Here the water rose from six to eight inches higher than '79 . This stream ... sent down a heavy torrent of water which was unable find outlet, save by course ... into the Station road, thence by the Post-office. The water of the river rose higher and higher until 10 o'clock the highest point was reached which was just sixteen to 18 inches lower than the great flood of '79" "The sheets of water soon filled the streets, blocking all the gratings of the sewers. A cottage on the Post Office bridge was submerged several inches . Mr Bonney [Gentlemen's Corner] also flooded; lower parts of houses in Station Road as well as the Railway Inn. The scene from the Free Methodist Church [The United Free Church] to Station Road and Riverside was that of a flowing river; and the school rooms of this church were submerged some four inches . All approaches to the Post Office and station under water, and only by carts and horses could letters be posted. Reads fellmonger business submerged some two feet , while the Sale Yard [Elms flats] was inundated. The Yard was united with the Mere, forming a gigantic lake, extending to beyond the Little Lodge, and covering some 40-50 acres. " "The rain caused the river to overflow its banks and flood the lower parts of town so that it was impossible to gain access to the post Office [Curry India]. A fellmonger's yard [Elms Flats] was flooded to a depth of 18 inches and caused much damage. The Reading Room [short distance into Brook Lane, on the left] was also flooded." "Mr John Self photographed the scene at Albert Place from several points, and copies can be had at one 1 shilling each" Level at spring pump scaled from postcard on p1 [ChG15]. [The reverse says "Flood 1899", but no report of floods of that scale can be found in the newspaper archives for 1899. It precisely matches other photos that match to the photo of the 1889 floods in FWN]	[FF24] [EAFFC; (Ips J, 25 Oct)] [FWN 26 Oct] [FWN 3 Dec 1910] [FHPA] [ChG15]

Framlingham Flood History

Year	Date	Severity	Rel. depth	Selected quotes	Sources
1892	14 Oct 1892	L		"Another Great Flood in the Mere this morning (Friday) resulting from the heavy down-pour of rain on Thursday night and the early hours of this morning. The [rainfall] record for this month must be nearly five inches. "	[FWN 15 Oct]
1893	13 Jul 1893	M		"...on Thursday morning, a rainstorm was experienced, the like of which is not remembered for at least half a century. The streets in the lower part of town were rendered impassable and the sewers burst in several places. In Station Road the depth of water was 16 to 18 inches. " "A Water Spout burst over the town about ten o'clock on Wednesday morning, when the rain came in perfect sheets of water, deluging the low-lying part of the town by the Post Office [Curry India], and bursting open the sewers. Cellars and houses were flooded, and many roofs of houses were unable to carry off the water quick enough to prevent its ingress to the bedrooms. At the time the water was quite two feet deep on the road by the Railway Inn. "	[EAFFC; (EADT, 14 Jul)] [EADT 14 Jul] [FWN 15 Jul]
1897	Feb 1897	M		Mr. Francis Read, of Framlingham, stating that during the recent flood his property was submerged to large extent. He considered that this was partly due to the high embankment made by the District Council on the Sewage Works	[FF24] [FWN 2 Mar]
1899	Feb 1899	L		"...and the gales of the few days past with their flood sequel have brought widespread havoc" [in the section for news local to Fram]	[FWN 18 Feb]
1902	19 Jul 1902	M		" The road from the Post Office to the station was flooded to a depth of 18 inches. recalling the floods of 1879 and 1880s. Many cottagers who were visiting the town for their weekly shopping were compelled to return with empty baskets." "Rain fell in torrents for an hour and a half. The roads in the lower part of town were flooded to 18 inches. The road to the Railway Station opposite Mill's Almshouses became a stream and the Reading Room in an adjacent road [short distance into Brook Lane, on the left] was flooded. " "In Fore Street the sewer burst, and the water rushed down the roadway in a resistless torrent, A wall dividing some property from the river was carried away by the water, and a large quantity of land subsided. "	[FF24] [EAFFC; (IpsJ, 25 Ju)] [DEX 25 Jul]
1903	15 Jun 1903	M		The low-lying parts of Framlingham were flooded on Monday evening to a depth of several inches. The water entered the " bunch of houses at the " Brooks," [Brook Lane/Vyces Road] driving the occupants to the upper rooms. ... the road at Albert Place was several inches under water, which subsided as quickly it had risen. The peculiar behaviour of the water in the river attracted no little attention, the stream at Albert Place running backwards towards the Mere. This was attributed to the rivers in the Mere being as yet comparatively dry and to heavy flows into the river lower down from other directions, forcing the water back.	[FWN 20 Jun]
1905	Jan 1905	L		"Backed up in the Mere giving rise to flooding downstream" "the heavy rain storms and floods which have prevailed recently" (in notes of Fram Farmers Club)	[FHPA] [EADT 14 Jan]
1910	2 Dec 1910	H	= 1889	The picture given below shows the floods, in Framlingham in October 1889, and is an accurate illustration of the present flooded condition of Albert Place, the only difference being that everything appearing therein ... is 21 years older. The abnormal rainfall causing the flood began at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, and there has thus been over 48 hours' continuous downpour. Residents in Albert Place ... had to hastily clear their bottom rooms, the floors of which have been several inches under water. ... The waters washed through the tanyard from the Mere into the river near the Mill Bridge, completely covered the Sale ground, and reached such height as to extinguish the Kiln fire at the adjoining Maltings—an extremely rare occurrence. As far back as the year 1614 a flood is recorded at the same spot in "The Guide to Framlingham." but more than two centuries are said to have elapsed between that and the next one.(1853). Coming to more recent years, many of our leaders remember the two great floods in Framlingham in the disastrous year of 1879, and many more still a similar event ten years later, depicted below.	[FF24] [FWN 3 Dec]
1912	26 Aug 1912	H	X - 3"	Albert Place flooded "same height as 1879." "Abnormal floods. The low-lying parts were all many feet under water. Furniture and various belongings were washed away and never recovered. For many hours there were scenes of desolation everywhere. The cut corn on many farms has been washed into the ditches. Residents in Albert Place showed a cut mark in the bricks showing the high water mark of 1879, which was not met by three inches, but some neighbours said it was higher." [The level at the spring pump scaled from a postcard [FHPA; 702F1] is 16", which seems significantly less than 3" short of 1879, but it may not have been at its peak.]	[FHPA] [FF24 31 Aug]
1916	29 Aug 1916	L		"30 hours of rain. ..." "the Meres and other low-lying parts of the town were quickly inundated, but happily there was not the serious flooding in the town experienced on former occasions,"	[FF24] [FWN 2 Sep]

Framlingham Flood History

Year	Date	Severity	Rel. depth	Selected quotes	Sources
1917	14 Jul 1917	M		"The storm raged for at least an hour and houses were quickly inundated with several inches of water appearing in the most unexpected places. The rain was accompanied by hailstones of unusual size." "The total rainfall during the storm, as registered at the College, was 1.89 inches, representing 189 tons on every acre ground. In 35 minutes 1¾ inches of rain fell. "	[EAFFC; (DEx, 20 Jul)] [FWN 21 Jul 1917]
1929		L		"Weather report for the year. Drought started in January and continued with slight breaks over most of country until autumn, then followed by heavy rain and floods. Heat wave in December."	[FF24]
1930	7 Aug 1930	M		"the expansive Meres resembled a miniature sea, all being completely inundated. The fast - swelling main stream through the town was curious spectacle, flowing for a time in an opposite direction towards the Meres , this being caused by the heavy weight of water rushing broadside into it from smaller streams to the south of the town and forcing it to recede. ...the worst experienced was at The Brooks [Brook Lane/Vyces Road], where the ground floors of three dwellings,... were under water to a depth of some two feetThe Fairfield Road and other low-lying parts of the parish were under water to a depth of several inches , but, happily, the material damage suffered was less serious.	[FWN 9 Aug]
1936	Nov 1936	L		"AS soon the floods subsided about a fortnight ago flock of Snipe settled down on the sodden grass-land about the Meres."	[FF24] [FWN 5 Dec 1936]
1937	21 May 1937	H	12"	"People were roused from sleep to rescue stock, furniture and all manner of goods and chattels. The night was full of activities as the work of succouring those distressed went on till dawn. The Brooks [Brook Lane/Vyces Road] again suffered terribly, but the most dramatic occurrence of all was the destruction of the bridge opposite Mr Brand's shop [The Wine shop]. Brooks rose to about 3 feet above ground, water rose to 4 foot in pig sty and 1 drowned. Charles Nesling's cattle and horses on Meres. His son saw the danger, caught a pony and rode bare back to round up cattle. Driven back to farm for safety. Rail line impassable. The bridge at Mr Robinson's farm [Little Lodge] suffered the same fate as Station Road bridge." Level at spring pump scaled from photo [FHPA; 648 F 2]	[FHPA] [FF24] [FWN 22 May]
1939	26 Jan 1939	M		"scenes ... almost the same as those following the memorable storm of May 21st, 1937. Once again the Mere became a miniature lake and the river was unable to carry away the mass of water. Albert Place and the road in front of the Post Office were flooded to a depth in places of about one and a half feet . The School Room of the Methodist Church was flooded, while the ground floor of houses in the vicinity suffered a like fate. Considerable damage to property has resulted At a little after midnight on Wednesday, Fairfield Road was only just passable by car... The sale ground, ...was under water. The old electric light works... were also flooded out, while old cars standing in the yard were half submerged. Strange to relate, the houses at "The Brooks" [Brook Lane/Vyces Road] where so much damage was done during the last flood, are practically high and dry" "John Self spoke of a tree across the river at Broadwater which acted as a dam and kept water back into the town. Mr Potter said that twice in two years, householders had suffered from severe flooding." Publication of [FWN] ended. The main sources used only thinly cover Fram during the period from 1939-1960.	[FHPA] [FF24] [FWN 28 Jan]
1939	30 Sep 1939				
1952	22 Nov 1952	M		"A road near Ipswich was flooded and when the River Ore rose at Framlingham (Suffolk), furniture was removed from downstairs rooms."	[FF24] [Birmingham Weekly Mercury 23 Nov1952]
1955	14 Aug 1955	M		a torrential three-hour downpour soon left its mark. In Fore Street the gutters were unable to coup with the water and 79- year-old Mr. and Mrs. S. Gyford. who live at the bottom of Fore Street, had to vacate their home. Water rushed through their front door and within a few minutes the whole of the lower floors were submerged. In Well Close Square the water crashed up against the shop windows of Mr. John Self's and under the door into the shop. ... Water also entered a number of houses in this vicinity. Children coming from the afternoon Sunday School service at the Methodist Church had to paddle through Station Road with their teachers in	[DEx 19 Aug]
1960	19 Sep 1960			Framlingham 1.50 inches in 45 min "Intense rain was reported in Framlingham, Suffolk, at Shoeburyness and Martlesham, Suffolk."	[EAFFC; British Rainfall (1861 to 1961)]
				The sources used do not cover the period after 1960 in as much detail	
1963	17 Sep 1963			"FRAMLINGHAM: a short but severe storm shortly after 6 p.m. on Tuesday. and within a few minutes road drains were blocked and two manholes blown up. No serious flooding was reported. "	[DEx 20 Sep]

Framlingham Flood History

Year	Date	Severity	Rel. depth	Rank [RL]	Selected quotes	Sources
1968	16 Sep 1968			3	"Weekend floods struck East Anglia Sunday night.... In the Framlingham area the badly-hit districts were at Earl Soham. Debenham, Framsdon and Bruisyard. Framlingham itself was virtually unaffected, "	[DEx 20 Sep] [RL]
1979	2 Feb 1979			1	Joint 1 st highest max annual flow measurement at Little Glemham Beversham gauge (1965-2023)	[RL]
1985	22 Jan 1985	L		13	"Against the dramatic backdrop of the ancient castle, the skaters have a superb outdoor rink as picturesque as anything in the Alps, on Saturday, just a week away before the floods came to spoil everybody's fun. "	[DEx 25 Jan] [RL]
1985	27 Dec 1985			1	Joint 1 st highest max annual flow measurement at Little Glemham Beversham gauge (1965-2023)	[RL]
1987	Oct 1987	L			"WI: At the last meeting the speaker and her knitting machine failed to arrive because of the flooded roads."	[DEx 23 Oct]
1993		L			"Elms car park partially flooded."	[FF24]
1999		L			"Fluvial flooding from the river Ore. The Mere overflowed into the present- day area of Tanyard's Court."	[SCC24]
2009	10 Feb 2009	L		10	"Water up to the steps of the Railway Inn." "Water in Station Road up to pavement level outside Railway Inn." "The mere was an incredible size this morning after the overnight rain. Riverside near the Coop was aptly named and the Elms car park was half flooded." "A typical high for this location [New Road bridge river gauge] is 1.1m and the highest level ever [as of 21-Dec-2022] recorded here is 1.16m (reached on Tuesday 10th February 2009 at 3:15am)."	[YouTube] [Hitchams blog] [FTC22] [RL]
2010		L			"Surface water flooding caused by heavy rainfall."	[SCC24]
2012		L			"Surface water flooding on Station Road"	[SCC24]
2013	10 Mar 2013			4		[RL]
2023	20 Oct 2023	H	38"		Storm Babet. Level at Spring pump scaled from photo on p4 and measured relative to fence rail to double-check.	[SCC24]

References

- [DEx] Search for 'flood Framlingham' in the [Diss Express \(1869-1999\) in the British Newspaper archive](#)
- [FVN] Search for 'flood Framlingham' in the Framlingham Weekly News (1859-1939) in the British Newspaper archive
- [FHPA] Search for 'flood' in the [Framlingham Historical Photo Archive](#)
- [ChG15] Charnwood Genealogy "[Floods in Framlingham](#)" (Jul 2015)
- [FF24] John Bridges, "The Framlingham Floods; An Historical Retrospect," Framfare (Mar 2024)
- [SCC24] Suffolk County Council, "[Framlingham Flood Investigation – Storm Babet 2023](#)" (Aug 2024) [no sources given]
- [EAFFC] David Archer "[East Anglia: Flash Flood Chronology](#)" (Sep 2023)
- [RL] River levels [Little Glemham/Blaxall Beversham gauge](#) Max annual flow & stage (level) [dataset](#) (1965-2023)

Sources for [FF24]:

[FVN]

Lamberts Family Almanac (1871 to 1916), includes daily rain gauge readings at Mount Pleasant, Framlingham by Reuben Whitehead

[Green1834] Richard Green "[The History, Topography and Antiquities of Framlingham and Saxtead](#)" (1834)

[Green1895] Richard Green (pub. posthumously by Robert Lambert), "The Guide to Framlingham" (1895)

Many thanks to John Bridges for his research, discussions and review.

However, any errors or omissions are mine alone

Bob Briscoe, 8 Sep 2024