

**Christine Corkett interviewed by Diana Brand on 9 December 2014 at Halsway Manor  
Track 2**

CC: Should I be sitting down do you think?

DB: Umm – okay, this is Diana Brand again on 9th December, 2014 interviewing Christine Corkett at Halsway Manor I'm going to ask her again about umm... a question about disasters because she's had second thoughts.

(Laughter)

Christine, you've remembered a couple of disasters that have happened here.

CC: Yes, they were fairly small ones. There was one night, it was a Contra Dance weekend, and we'd all arrived and it was about half an hour before the evening meal so round about 6 o'clock the fire alarm went and the then Duty Manager said it was in a particular zone as the fire alarm shows you which bit of the building the fire is supposed to be and it was the kitchen and the bit of the back corridor. So we all went outside dutifully, except one chap who was in the um.. having a shower and refused to evacuate at that moment. Anyway we stood outside and eventually the Duty Manager had been told by the Fire Brigade they wouldn't come until she had found the fire and we couldn't find the fire so, but there was a slightly odd smell and that's all we could find at that time.

Anyway, a little bit later on the chef came to my husband 'cos he was a, a trustee and I think there was somebody doing the bar and the chef, they were the only two staff still here and he said, "That smell is getting stronger and I think if I shut the back door, that the fire alarm will go again." So, at that point we phoned...it seemed to be near where the electricity came into the building so Western Power were phoned and they came out quite quickly and they said."Oh, we can't touch that, it's hot cables. We will have to get the Hot Cable Brigade to come in and deal with that." So it was, well y'know....by then I think it was about 10 o'clock at night.

"Well when will they come?"

"Oh, they'll come as soon as they can."

So, they arrived around about midnight and they said "Oh you need the..um..the junction box dealt with as it's hot cables and .um..but the hot cables, when the junction box had been taken off was gently sort of smouldering, the wooden board on which all this was mounted. And that was dealt with and, y'know, everyone went to bed. The next morning, the fire alarm went off again and it was the second lot of hot cables so they came again and sorted that out, but that could have been a nasty fire..

DB: And I believe there was a flood as well was there?..on another occasion.

CC: That was another occasion when somebody had left a tap running in, in the Mews and it had flooded, it was on a Sunday so everyone had cleared the Mews and going home and the person who was Deputy Manager at the time here had gone over to lock up to be greeted with um water coming down the corridor, and um, into the Brendon Room which um had – wasn't terribly deep it was probably an inch of water, but water gets everywhere doesn't it and it takes a lot of clearing up. Well the first thing we knew about it was being phoned at home saying, "What do I do? It's not deep enough for the fire brigade to come", because they like water three inches deep because their pipes are that size, an inch they can't deal with. So, I think we brought on our Vax machine that will Hoover up water over and with the one that was here, three or four of us managed to get rid of all the water but it did require a new floor

in the Brendon Room but...was one of these sort of 1960s /70 block floors, with little sort of 6 inch by an inch blocks in different directions and they had all come loose so it was a bit of a disaster really that occasion..

DB: Ok.