

## **In Extreme Conditions God Will Come.**

March 1963. The severe snow continued that had started just before Christmas 1962. Farmers unable to reach their animals in time; wept. Tears for they died alone, buried under thick snow.

*Pain, so much pain.*

My eldest sister took me to Fenwick's Department store [it is still there today] in Newcastle upon Tyne. It was to buy my first boots and new clothes. A rare treat from hand me downs. On the bus into the city I could hardly contain my excitement.

Once back home I was allowed to go out in my new clothes. Another rare treat. Mum must be in a good mood or maybe it must be my birthday! I can see myself strutting around. Ah yes! Those red trousers, with of course, the elastic under the sole. A brown suede jacket. My white ankle boots with fur around the trim. I felt on top of the world. New clothes. All mine.

*I felt special.*

### Wednesday February 1979.

Driving home after a late shift, in the rain, my driver's windscreen wiper decides to depart company for my car. Knowing I would have little hope of finding it in the dark I continued home.

### Next day: Thursday

Peter: It's snowing. You can't drive without a wiper.

Me: Oh, I'll be ok. It's only few flakes.

Thursday was always our Ward Sister's day off. Myself and my fellow Staff Nurse alternated being in charge. This Thursday it was my turn. So, I had to go to work. I had to!

All afternoon I received reports on how heavy the snow was falling. As I walked to my car at 5pm, I realised just how heavy they meant.

I crawled along the main road with my hand constantly wiping the snow off the windscreen. After about five miles I turn off to drive the next five miles along a country lane.

I am not finding this very funny. Radio reports that even snow ploughs had got stuck. The verges were like walls. The height of the snow a barrier to see beyond. Soon I came across a coach that was going nowhere. A car pulled up behind me.

There I am in my working shoes [ flimsy] and small coat. No hat or gloves. No torch. Talking to a stranger about how we were going to get home. By the way, no mobiles either. No way of contacting Peter or even knowing if he was all right on his motor bike. Nothing for it; the stranger and I decided to abandon our cars where they sat and walk.

We had been walking some time or at least it felt as though we had, when a car came towards us. After a brief discussion she offered us a lift. She was only going to collect her daughter and would walk round the coach. Although going back the way we had come, we were just so glad to get out of the freezing conditions; we got in.

We sat, this stranger and I in eery silence watching the length of time move forwards. Brilliant, we may well have been home by now. At quarter to seven we decided to get out and walk. Again.



Our second attempt was now scarier than the first. The snow drifts were much higher. The width of the road had lessened to barely one lane. Step by step the depth of this experience gripped us in fear. I have never before or since been so grateful for the company of a stranger.

Then in the distance we saw two people. It was Peter with a neighbour, carrying a torch and spades. The relief of seeing Peter was enormous. As was the relief of being rescued.

Extreme experiences can remind us our daily walk with God is through the length, breadth, depth and height of life.

The **length** of letting go of things past to look ahead to the cross.

The **breadth** of reaching out to others.

The **depth** from the foundations laid down by Christ as we spread around our communities

Keeping in touch this way will mean it stirs our hearts.

We will feel the cold and bitterness.

We will feel the warmth and joy.

In the **height** of life

**we live as though heaven is on earth.**

**God will come.**

