

J.Brown restoration of Flood damaged 300 year old stone floor & a Victorian geometric tiled floor Grade 2 listed farmhouse.

As a result of extensive flooding the stone floors had been covered in mud & water for some time and during the necessary drying out process with industrial de-humidifiers the stone floors had suffered with spalling in a few areas (spalling is when the layers of stone shed )



Picture showing spalling caused by flood damage and drying out.

The above picture also shows the near uniform grey colour the stone floor had become due to mud drying into the skin of the stone slabs.

We removed any loose/spalled stone layers and cut out damaged mortar from the joints we removed most of the mortar because it had been contaminated with flood water which did contain some sewage.



Stone floor restored & sealed.

Note the difference in the colour tones now that the dirt & grime from flooding has been removed.

This took more than 6 hours of cleaning to produce this effect.

The mortar was cut out using Exakt saws and Fein Supercut machine along with Vacuum attachments to prevent dust blowing everywhere.

The two machine above are invaluable in our restoration work.

P3.



Victorian geometric tiled floor before restoration. Top right shows efflorescence.



Victorian geometric tiles restored cleaned & sealed.

**Your Home**

# Avoid the floods of tears by playing by the rules

**FLOODS** are every homeowners' worst nightmare. **JON BROWN** tells you what to do when disaster strikes

**D**ISASTERS always seem to strike during cover of darkness.

We had just returned home from the pub when we noticed the puddle inside the back door. In half an hour it had turned into a new – and vigorous – tributary of the Mersey, flowing merrily in through the back door and out of the front door.

In the process it flooded the entire ground floor of our home in West Lancashire, ruining tiles, carpets, flagstones and floorboards. The Turkish rugs got it, the shoes stuffed away beneath the stairs got it and a good deal of the furniture got it too.

At first, in a moment of Canute-like blind optimism, I thought I might be able to divert the water by digging some kind of trench in the back garden. Then I went outside and realised the entire 30-odd acre field behind our house had been transformed into a lake.

And it was flowing only one way: through our house.

Two weeks ago, when the floods hit Carlisle and parts of north Wales, my heart went out to those householders affected and I couldn't help but reflect on the cardinal rules of coping with such catastrophes.

Perhaps we were blessed: we had no issues with our insurance company; our loss adjuster was straight-talking and efficient; the firm appointed to do the clean-up were angels; and we found a company of genuine craftsmen on our doorstep to undertake the tricky business of restoring the 300-year-old flagstones in our kitchen.

So here are the cardinal (and many of them very obvious) rules:

1. Do keep your insurance policy in a safe place and keep a copy elsewhere (out of reach of rising flood waters, for instance).
2. Do phone the insurance company as soon as you realise there's a problem. The sooner you phone, the sooner they can put the wheels in motion to get things sorted. We phoned ours at 11.30pm on a Friday night so our claim was logged. They phoned back first thing the next morning to begin organising the clean-up.
3. Do make a list as quickly as possible of all potential damage and losses. It's amazing what you might forget if you leave it a day or two.
4. Don't go through the Yellow Pages looking for flood restoration experts. The insurance company should do that for you. If they don't offer to do it, insist. Our company appointed a firm called Rainbow International who carried out the clean-up and drying-out operations. They were brilliant, not least because they were able to offer



**ONE-WAY TRAFFIC:** The force of the West Lancashire flood waters take their toll on the 300-year-old tiles



**FULLY RESTORED:** The flagstones look as good as new after the tricky restoration job and, inset, Steve Sinnott of Heritage Tiling

amusing tales about disasters far worse than ours. They also ensured the house was dry before withdrawing the last of the industrial-sized fans which, for a number of weeks, turned the place into something akin to Cape Canaveral.

5. Don't start contacting carpet companies, builders or carpenters yourself. The insurance company or their agents should do that for you.
6. Don't be scared of entering into discussions with the loss adjuster about what options are open to you. We, for instance, took the cash rather than getting a firm in to re-sand and varnish our floorboards. The money went towards a carpet instead.
7. Do ensure you get consent from the insurance company before

engaging any specialists. We had a few square metres of Victorian floor tiles and 300-year-old flagstones in our kitchen which had been ruined by the water and mud which swept through the house. We managed to find a specialist firm to restore these after seeking consent from the loss adjuster. The insurance company paid their fees directly.

8. Don't panic. Let's face it: a flood is a small domestic disaster which amounts to a lot of hassle and the loss, potentially, of items which are of sentimental value. But it isn't the death of a loved one or, God forbid, anything like what thousands of south east Asians have been through in recent weeks. Keep a sense of perspective and try to keep your sense of humour.

## Calling in the specialists

**JUST** when we were despairing of finding the right company to carry out a specialist restoration job on our Victorian tiled floor and flag-stoned kitchen, we found one – in Merseyside.

Heritage Tiling, based in Seaford, was launched by Steve Sinnott in 1982 when the company he worked for ran out of work.

He is a trained tiler-mason but developed a passion and expertise in restoration after cutting and laying stone, tile and mosaic floors all over the world.

His most unusual job, he says,

was working in Algeria for Tarmac. More typical examples of his work include the restoration of the mosaic floors in the listed Belfast Harbour building and a wide number of churches and historic homes across the UK.

Our floors were treated with a neat polish-stripper and a Seville Orange-based product with several scrubblings – by hand and machine – in between. It was given a final clean with yet another, gentler product.

Finally, four coats of a water-based emulsion sealer were applied.

Article about our work on this contract in the Liverpool Echo.

Crabtree Farm  
Crabtree Lane  
Burscough  
Lancashire

Thu, Jan 27, 2005

Dear Sir or Madam:

Heritage Tiling transformed a shabby, damaged and dirty (albeit original) flagstone kitchen floor into a beautiful feature in our Grade II listed farmhouse.

They gave it a deep cleanse worthy of Clinique, repaired the damaged stones and grouting and then sealed it.

The treatment brought out all the natural beauty and variety of the stone, which changed from a uniform drab and dirty grey to a mix of warm brown and russet hues.

In addition, Heritage Tiling also expertly restored a floor of early Victorian quarry tiles which had been badly flood-damaged to their original condition and colour.

Their service was excellent and I would have no hesitation in recommending them for jobs where original features need to be restored to their one-time splendour.

Their techniques clearly ensure that all the heritage and character value of the floors is retained.

Sincerely,

  
Jon Brown

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Brilliant reference from our client.

