

The Balti Triangle Back in Business

Thursday 28 July 2005 - 14:45, local people were busy living their lives. Some were shopping, some were working and some were trading, all unaware of what was to come. In less than four minutes a T4 tornado (as measured on the Torro scale) ripped through the South East part of Birmingham. With wind speeds of between 115mph to 136mph, it caused mass devastation to everything that lay in its path; homes, businesses, schools, parks and cars.

Homes were severely devastated, buildings damaged, cars were wrecked beyond repair, parks were destroyed and damage to over 1,000 trees was sustained. Fortunately there were no fatalities, however there were serious injuries.

The Tornado's impact on the residents and businesses of Birmingham's Balti Triangle, one of the most colourful and unique areas in the city was shattering. This exhibition captures some of the terrifying images witnessed on July 28th 2005 and shows the resolve of the community as they continue to welcome visitors back to eat, shop and experience this vibrant neighbourhood.



"Tornado leaves trail of havoc"

The Birmingham Post
July 29 2005

"Despite the obviously difficult conditions I was heartened to see how supportive everyone was being of each other"

Lord Mayor
Councillor John Hood
July 29 2005

"The tornado was formed on a boundary where warm humid air traveling north eastwards interacted with cooler, drier air present over Birmingham"

The Birmingham Post
July 29 2005

"Emergency services today said it was a "miracle that no-one died as a 130mph tornado swept across Birmingham"

The Birmingham Post
July 29 2005

"Tiles from roofs acted like missiles"

The Birmingham Post
July 29 2005

"Trees fell like dominoes"

The Birmingham Post
July 29 2005

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Birmingham City Council's response to the Tornado

- Immediately after the Tornado had struck on the 28th July 2005 Birmingham City Council activated the Emergency Plan response team within 30 minutes and evacuated the area. They transported and re-housed 150 residents who were displaced.
- City Council teams worked round the clock, with the emergency services, to make sure the area that had been hit was made safe and secure to enable as many residents as possible to return to their homes.
- A tornado hotline and three tornado information bureaux's were set up to give advice to residents and distribute regular updates.
- Meetings were held with local traders and local residents to agree the best way forward.
- The City Council ensured properties were cleaned-up and handed back to owner/occupiers as soon as it was safe for them to do so.
- After successfully managing the emergency response to the tornado the Council then started to co-ordinating the longer term recovery process for the devastated area.
- The City Council mounted a marketing campaign - 'Back in Business', to put the Balti Triangle firmly back on the map following the havoc wreaked on local businesses by the tornado.
- On the 31st October the marketing campaign was launched with new festive lights to celebrate Diwali, Eid and Christmas. BBC Midlands Today's Ashley Blake carried out the official switch-on of the first festive lights for the Balti Triangle.
- The City Council has submitted to Central Government a regeneration plan for the affected area.

To make a donation to the Tornado Appeal please visit
www.bhamfoundation.co.uk or send a cheque made payable to:

The Birmingham Foundation (Tornado Appeal) posting it to:
The Birmingham Foundation (Tornado Fund), Suite 2A, St Georges Court,
1 Albion Street, Birmingham B1 3AH - Thank you for your support.



This exhibition is a joint partnership between Birmingham City Council and The Mail. The exhibition forms part of the 'Back in Business' marketing campaign.



“Minutes Before”

The tornado gathers momentum minutes before it wreaks havoc on the unexpected inhabitants of South East Birmingham.



"The Famous Road"

The shops and restaurants in the heart of the Balti Triangle were severely effected by tornado damage.



"A Different Street"

Birchwood Road, one of the many streets devastated by the tornado.



"Taken Tiles"

Many properties were damaged by winds of up to 136mph.



“On The Beat!”

Police make their way through the fallen trees and damaged cars.



"Ladypool School"

The School sustained extensive damage, thankfully it was closed for school holidays at the time.



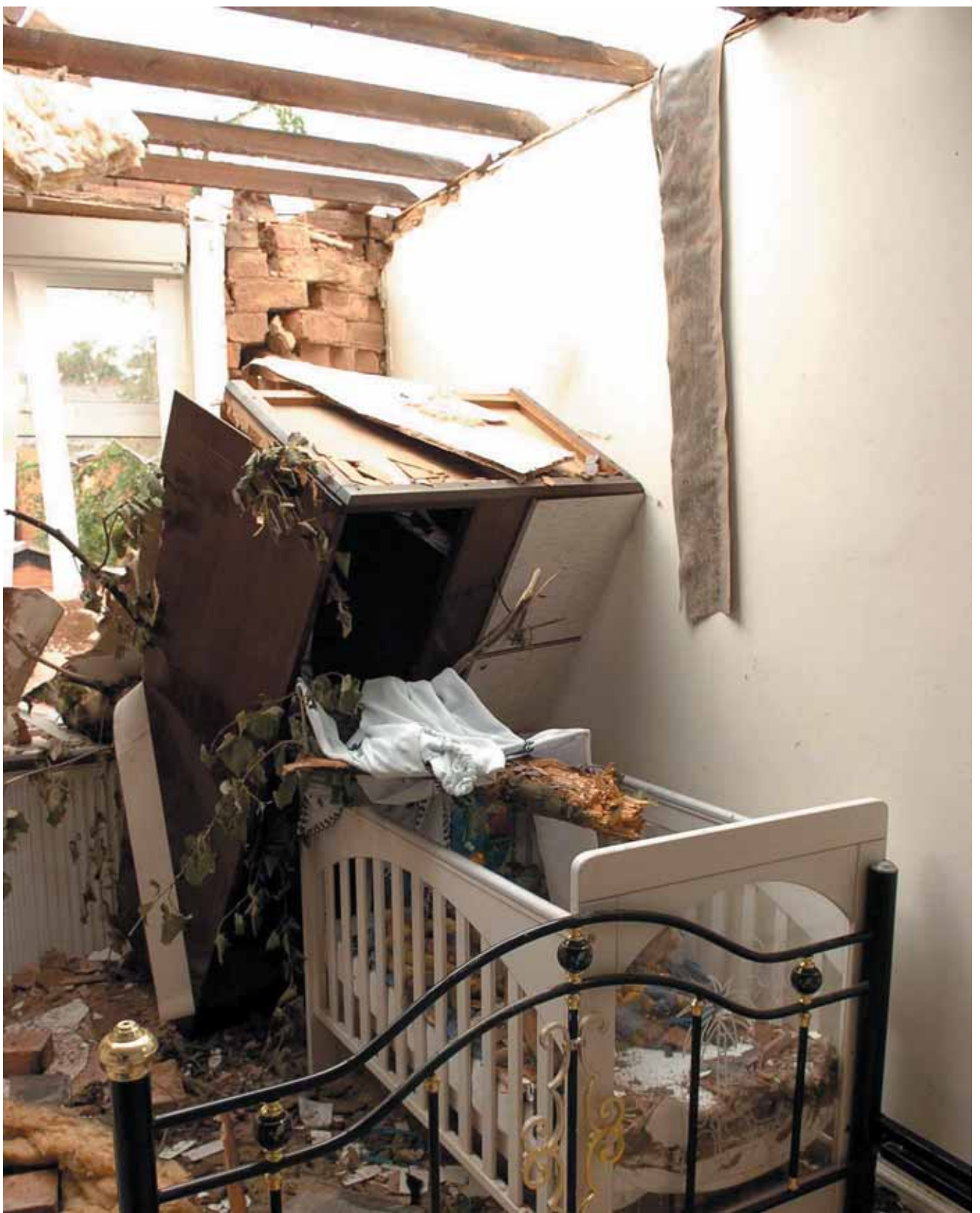
"Car Crush"

3 passengers were rescued from this car following the tornado, near Ladypool Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham.



"Across The Road"

Most residents look out of the window to a very different view.



“Miraculous Escape”

It was fortunate that the cot was empty at the time of the tornado.



"Missing Roof"

The unpredictable tornado lifted the roofs from some houses whilst neighbouring houses remained untouched.



"Fallen Tree"

One of many cars that were severely damaged by the tornado, most were damaged beyond repair.



"The Royal Visit"

The Duke of Edinburgh on his visit to the Balti Triangle to talk to residents and emergency services who were effected by the tornado.



"Scaffold"

Many buildings needed scaffolding to secure the existing structures.



"Community Pride"

Communities come together to begin the recovery process, and rebuild their homes, their livelihoods, their community and their environment.



“A Welcome Sign”

Ladypool Road was closed. It reopened soon after the tornado struck.



"Open in Adversity"

Despite horrendous damage some traders open up as the clean up operation begins.



“What A Sparkler!”

BBC Midlands Today presenter Ashley Blake switches on the Festive Lights in the Balti Triangle, a sign that the area is back in business.



"Cooking With Gas!"

Balti owes its introduction to Birmingham's large Pakistani and Kashmiri communities who brought it to the city in the late 1970s.



“Specialised Tailoring”

Nesh Mehan the proprietor of the shop opens as normal for business.



"Asian Sweets"

Cherry Barfi - made with sugar, milk and usually pistachios, almond, cherry or chocolate depending on the flavour. Asian sweets can be bought at one of the areas many sweet centres.



“Groceries Galore!”

There is a fantastic array of exotic fruit, vegetables and spices to buy in the Balti Triangle.



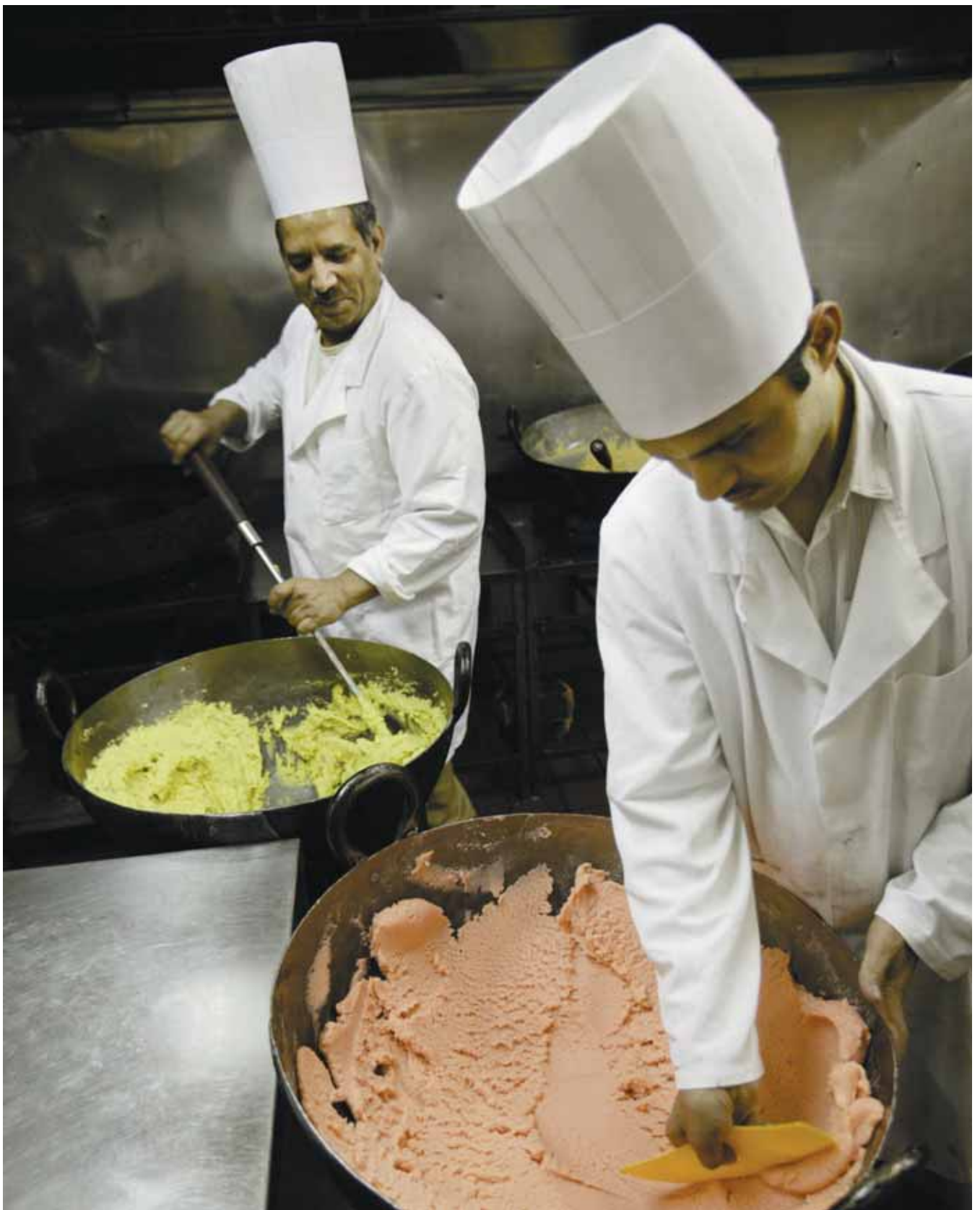
"Stunning Silks"

Local textile shops stock Eastern style dresses and fabrics.



“Naan Bread Dipping”

Visitors enjoying a Balti at one of the areas many Balti restaurants.



"Sweet Makers"

Chefs making Barfi at one of the areas many sweet centres.



"Spice Up Your Life!"

The variety and quality of spices available in the Balti Triangle is superb.