

## **Hurricane Fabian**

Hurricane Fabian struck Bermuda on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2003 with winds peaking at around 100 -105 knots (115 -120 mph), with some gusts reported over 140 knots (160 mph), tragically causing the deaths of four people when they were swept off the Causeway. Fabian, a Category 3 hurricane, was among the most powerful hurricanes to have directly impacted the Island in the last 150 years – see footnote<sup>1</sup>.

There was a very strong storm surge with huge battering waves caused extensive damage to the coastline, especially along the south shore. The winds blew down hundreds of trees Island-wide. Power was lost in the majority of homes and businesses outside the City of Hamilton, with approximately 25,000 out of 32,031 electricity meters going out of service; however, restoration of power to all customers took only three weeks. Fabian weakened parts of the electrical supply distribution system and a rehabilitation plan was implemented in October 2003.

Insurers initially estimated the damage caused by Hurricane Fabian at \$75 million. However, there have been higher than this especially if one includes knock-on factors – e.g. loss of income due to hotel closures<sup>2</sup>. There was damage to roofs from the loss of roof slate, damage to watercraft; flooding and damage to structures in coastal storm surge areas. Two large hotels suffered major damage and were closed for repairs until the spring of 2004.

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<sup>1</sup> Previous powerful hurricanes affecting Bermuda include the storms of 24 Oct 1895 (direct hit with 120 mph winds), 5<sup>th</sup> Sept 1899 (Powerful Cat 3 passed 60 miles to the west), 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 1922 (powerful Cat 4 with 150 mph. central winds passed around 60 miles to the southeast), and Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> 1926 (direct hit 120 mph winds). In Sept 1899 the Island suffered from a further major storm, just one week later, with 100 mph winds on the 13<sup>th</sup>, from a Cat 2 hurricane direct hit, which added to the previous devastation and totally destroyed the causeway. Hurricane Edna 17/18 Sept 1953 had central winds of 115 mph but she passed about 75 miles to the west, early on the 18th Sept 1953. There was much roof damage was reported and 3 people were injured.