



The Great Fire of London



London
(England)



Timeline

2 nd Sept. 1666	6 th Sept. 1666	10 th Oct. 1666	27 th Oct. 1666	22 nd Jan. 1667	1668	1677	1680
Fire breaks out on Pudding Lane, London at midnight	Last fire extinguished by a team led by Samuel Pepys	A day of fasting and money collections for those who lost homes	Robert Hubert is convicted and hanged for starting the fire	Commons Committee decide the fire started accidentally	Fire prevention regulations approved by parliament	Monument to the Great Fire of London complete	The first fire insurance company is set up

Key Vocabulary

Alderman	a senior official in the City of London
Candle Snuffer	used to put out the flame of a candle by pinching its wick
carters	people who drove carts and charged lots of money during the fire to help people escape
cresset lamp	lamps which burned a rope soaked in a flammable liquid
embers	fragments of burning material left as a fire dies
fire court	a group set up after the fire where judges could make decisions about disagreements between building owners and the people who lived in them
fire hook	a large rod with a hooked end used to pull down damaged houses or to remove houses to try and stop the fire spreading
fire post	firefighting bases with 30 soldiers and 100 volunteers set up around the city
fire squirt	a pump used to suck up water and then squirt it at the fire
gunpowder	explosive used to blow up houses to stop the fire spreading
hearth tax	fee paid to the king depending on the number of hearths per house
jettied houses	houses where the top levels leant over the bottom
looters	people who stole things during and after the fire
Privy Council	a group of advisers to the king
Rege Sincera	means 'sincere ruler' and was an anonymous person who wrote a detailed account of the fire

General Knowledge

Fire Fighting

Thomas Farriner's family was trapped upstairs in their house when the fire broke out in a bakery at Pudding Lane. They had to escape through a window into the house next door.

The fire spread fast due to a range of reasons. Many houses were made from wood and close together. There were also factories near Pudding Lane filled with oil, tar, rope and brandy – all highly flammable. There was a strong easterly wind and it was also the middle of the night, so people were slow to react.

.People didn't have large fire hoses in the 1660s – they would have carried water in leather buckets, squirted water through a big syringe (like a squirt gun) and pulled down burning buildings with long metal hooks.

The fire fighters wanted to tear down houses that might get burned so the fire wouldn't spread so quickly, but the Lord Mayor of London disagreed. In the end, King Charles II had to ask for the houses to be pulled down, but by then the fire had already grown very big.

Rebuilding

Although there were only a few recorded deaths from the fire, many poor people were not even recorded as existing in the first place. Also, many were never found after the fire. Houses were rebuilt out of bricks instead of wood. The new streets were also designed to be wider, and sewers were installed so the city was more sanitary. When the houses and shops that had been destroyed in the fire were being rebuilt, people thought it would also be a good idea to build a monument to remember the Great Fire of London. It was designed by Sir Christopher Wren and took six years to build – it is 61 metres high, which is also the same distance between where it stands and site in Pudding Lane where the fire began. It has a bronze sculpture on the top to look like flames.



Famous Figures

Samuel Pepys (1633-1703)

Samuel Pepys is famous for keeping a diary for most of the 1660s, so he wrote a lot about the Great Fire in 1666. He also played an important part in helping to fight the fire by warning King Charles II that more needed to be done on the day the fire broke out (the King himself, and the Duke of York, took charge).

King Charles II (1630-1685)

King Charles II ruled from 1660-1685 and was king during the Great Fire of London. He helped the fire fighters, gave rewards to people who tried to stop the fire, and helped people who were hungry and homeless after the fire was over.

James, Duke of York (1633-1701)

The Lord High Admiral of England. Along with King Charles II, James took charge of the firefighting efforts and helped to end the Great Fire. James' guards acted as policemen to keep people and shops safe during the fire.

John Evelyn (1620-1706)

John Evelyn warned King Charles II in 1661 that the way houses in London were built would mean that a fire would be a disaster. When the Great Fire happened in 1666, he wrote about it in his diary – he walked around the city on 7th September and wrote about how people who had lost their homes were camping in the fields, and that the ground and charred wood was still so hot that holes burned in his shoes.



The first proper London Fire Brigade was created in 1866, 200 years after the Great Fire.