

The Great Fire of London

In 1666, London was very different to how it is now. The buildings were made of wood and were packed tightly together. It had been a long, hot summer and the wooden buildings were very dry.

Did You Know...?



After the the Great Fire of London, many different insurance companies, volunteer groups and parish authorities set up their own firefighting services to protect buildings during fires.



The buildings had firemarks, these were used to identify which buildings were covered by each company. If there was a fire, several fire brigades would attend. But they would only fight the fire if their company insured it!

Eventually, in 1866, these brigades merged and became the first fire service.

In the early hours of Sunday 2nd September, 1666, a fire started in the bakery on Pudding Lane. Thomas Farriner, the baker, had forgotten to put out the fire he had used to bake the bread. The fire soon got out of control and before long the bakery was alight. The fire then quickly spread to nearby buildings.

There was no fire service in 1666 and firefighting was very basic. Leather buckets, axes and water squirts were used to fight the flames. These were of little use against the fire because the strong wind was fanning the flames quicker than the fire could be fought.



On Sunday evening, people started to pull down buildings to try and stop the fire from spreading. On Monday, the fire was still raging throughout the city. People began to panic and to move their families and belongings to safety using boats on the river. The inferno continued through Tuesday, when it destroyed St Paul's Cathedral.



On Wednesday, the wind began to die down. The flames spread less quickly and people were able to fight the fire with more success. It was Thursday before the fire was successfully stopped.

The fire had been a disaster. Six people died and thousands of people were made homeless.

When London was rebuilt, the planners made sure that the buildings were made from brick and were built further apart to try to prevent any future fire from spreading so far.



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Answer the following questions using full sentences.

1. When did the Great Fire of London begin?

2. Where did the fire start?

3. What started the Great Fire of London?

4. Give 3 reasons why the fire spread as quickly as it did.

5. What did people fight fires with in 1666?

6. Which building was destroyed on Tuesday?

7. What helped to stop the fire?

8. How did London change when it was rebuilt? Why?

9. How do you think the people of London felt after the fire was put out? Why?
