



How does the past change the future?

The Great Fire of London



London in 1666 and London Today

Creativity

Resilience

Community



Sticky Knowledge

- The Fire of London started on 2nd September 1666 in Thomas Farriner's bakery on Pudding Lane in the middle of the night. The fire lasted for 5 days
- Samuel Pepys wrote a diary about what happened. He went to see the Lord Mayor to ask him to do something to help.
- The houses were pulled down using fire hooks and people used leather buckets to try and put out the fire.
- People escaped on the River Thames on boats. St. Paul's Cathedral was destroyed by the fire.
- Houses in London were mainly built from wood, which is flammable, especially when it is very dry. The houses were also very close together, so fire could easily spread.

Timeline of events

Sunday 2nd September 1666:
Early Morning – The fire begins

Sunday 2nd September 1666:
Morning – Samuel Pepys begins to write about the fire

Sunday 2nd September:
Evening – Houses are pulled down to prevent the fire spreading

Monday 3rd September 1666:
Morning – People carry their possessions to safety on the River Thames

Monday 3rd September 1666:
Evening – The fire spreads close to the Tower of London

Tuesday 4th September 1666:
St Paul's Cathedral is destroyed

Wednesday 5th September 1666:
The fire burns more slowly as the wind dies down

Thursday 6th September 1666:
The fire is under control and is put out

Subject Specific Vocabulary

Flammable		When something/a material burns easily. When the fire broke out most of the houses were made of wood. Wood is a highly flammable material, especially when it is dry.	How? This meant that the fire could spread very easily	After the fire the King ordered that no more house be made from just wood and straw.
Fire Brigade		People trained to put out fires. In 1666 there was no fire brigade like the ones we know now. Instead firefighting was basic with people using equipment such as leather buckets, fire hooks and squirts to fight fires.	How? People didn't train to be firefighters so had little skill in putting out fires	Despite the fire it wasn't until 1833 that the Fire Brigade we recognise today was formed.
Pudding Lane		Pudding Lane is believed to be the location where the fire started. Thomas Farriner owned a bakery that was on Pudding Lane.	Where? Near Pudding Lane there is a monument to the Great Fire of London	Pudding Lane was the starting point for the Great Fire of London
Tower of London		The Tower of London is a historic castle in London, near the River Thames. During the Great Fire of London houses were destroyed all around the tower to prevent the fire from spreading to it.	Where? You can still visit the Tower of London today.	Much of London's gunpowder was stored in the Tower. This is why they had to prevent the fire from reaching it.
Fire Hook		Fire hooks were used to help fight the Great Fire of London. They were used to pull houses down in the path of the fire to help prevent it spreading.	How? Fire hooks were used along with gunpowder to destroy houses during the fire.	By pulling down houses, the fire eventually stopped.
River Thames		The River Thames is a large river running through London. During the fire many people escaped to the river, hoping the water would keep them safe.	How? The River was also the main source of water for fighting the fire.	Many people brought their valuables to the River, hoping to keep them safe.
St Paul's Cathedral		St Paul's Cathedral is a famous church in London. It was destroyed during the fire and ordered to be rebuilt by the King.	Where? The 'old' St Paul's Cathedral stood on the same place as the new one.	Sir Christopher Wren oversaw the rebuilding of St Paul's which started in 1675
Summer of 1666		The summer of 1666 had been long and hot with very little rainfall. It is thought that this had an important part to play in the fire as the dried-out wood and straw helped the fire spread quickly.	How? The lack of rain meant that the level of water in the River Thames was much lower than usual.	The houses were dry because of the lack of rain. This helped them to catch fire more easily.