

# The Great Fire of London 1666

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## **HOW DID IT START ?**

- ♦ The fire started when some hot coals fell out of a bakers oven.
- ♦ Straw was on the floor and soon set alight
- ♦ This happened at night and the fire soon spread
- ♦ The baker was the Kings Baker. His name was Thomas Farrinor The shop was on Pudding Lane

## **WHEN DID IT START ?**

- ♦ It started at 2 am on the 2nd of September 1666 and ended four days later, 6th September 1666.

## **WHY DID IT SPREAD SO QUICKLY ?**

There were lots of reasons

- 1) It had been another long hot summer and everything was very dry
- 2) Most houses were made from wood—so they burned easily
- 3) Most of the houses were very close together—so the fire spread quickly
- 4) Near where the fire started there were warehouses with flammable things like tar and rope.
- 5) Houses did not have running water. Water was came from pumps in the streets. The water pump near where the fire started was out of order.
- 6) There was also a drought due to the hot weather—everything was very dry
- 7) There was no fire brigade. All people could use were leather buckets and water squirts.
- 8) The wind was blowing towards the most densely (heavily) populated part of London.

## **HOW DID THEY TRY TO PUT THE FIRE OUT ?**

- ♦ To begin with the Lord Mayor of London did very little. Fires were common on London at this time.
- ♦ The Mayor felt the fire at first was nothing unusual—and would soon go out
- ♦ The fire soon got out of control
- ♦ Buckets and hand powered water squirts were used but they were not enough.
- ♦ Firebreaks were tried – this was when the king ordered that certain houses be pulled down to create a break in the fire.

## **WHY DID THE FIRE GO OUT ?**

- ♦ The wind changed direction—and blew the fire towards the stone parts of the city—slowing it down.
- ♦ The weather got cooler
- ♦ The firebreaks slowed it down – with the help of the army !

## **WHAT WERE THE CONSEQUENCES ( EFFECTS) OF THE FIRE ?**

- ♦ It destroyed about 80 % of London.
- ♦ The Great Fire destroyed about 13,200 houses, 84 parish churches, and the old St. Paul's Cathedral. The Cathedral was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren
- ♦ Less than 10 people died (we think 6 died), but thousands were made homeless
- ♦ The fire had destroyed a dangerous and unhealthy area of London, and new buildings of brick and stone replaced the wooden houses these were a lot cleaner.
- ♦ Houses were built wider apart

## **HOW DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE FIRE OF LONDON AND THE PLAGUE ?**

- ♦ Parish records give us some information on both of theses events.
- ♦ One of the best sources of information is Samuel Pepys. He lived through both the fire and the plague and he kept a dairy.

## **WHY DID SOME PEOPLE BLAME THE FIRE ON A CATHOLIC PLOT ?**

- ♦ Shortly after the fire started a man called Robert Hubert said he started the fire. He was a Catholic
- ♦ Hubert wasn't even in the country when the fire started and he was mentally ill. But he was executed any way !