

## Historical events

### The Great Fire of London

By Ben Johnson

A fire started on September 2nd, 1666 in the King's bakery in Pudding Lane near London Bridge. Fires were quite a common occurrence in those days and were soon quelled. Indeed, when the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Bloodworth was woken up to be told about the fire, he replied "Pish! A woman might piss it out!". However, that summer had been very hot and there had been no rain for weeks, so consequently the wooden houses and buildings were tinder dry.



Photo from Historic UK

The fire soon took hold: 300 houses quickly collapsed and the strong east wind spread the flames further, jumping from house to house. The fire swept through the warren of streets lined with houses, the upper stories of which almost touched across the narrow winding lanes. Efforts to bring the fire under control by using buckets quickly failed. Panic began to spread through the city.

As the fire raged on, people tried to leave the city and poured down to the River Thames in an attempt to escape by boat.

As a last resort gunpowder was used to blow up houses that lay in the path of the fire, and so create an even bigger fire-break, but the sound of the explosions started rumours that a French invasion was taking place.... even more panic!!

As refugees poured out of the city, St. Paul's Cathedral was caught in the flames. The acres of lead on the roof melted and poured down on to the street like a river, and the great cathedral collapsed. Luckily the Tower of London escaped the inferno, and eventually the fire was brought under control, and by the 6th September had been extinguished altogether.

Only one fifth of London was left standing! Virtually all the civic buildings had been destroyed as well as 13,000 private dwellings, but amazingly only six people had died.

Although the Great Fire was a catastrophe, it did cleanse the city. The overcrowded and disease-ridden streets were destroyed and a new London emerged. A monument was erected in Pudding Lane on the spot where the fire began and can be seen today, where it is a reminder of those terrible days in September 1666.

Designed by Dariany de los Reyes and Silvana forero González

### Questions about the text.

1. When did the fire start at King's Bakery?
  - a) on September 2nd, 1966
  - b) on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1996
  - c) on march 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967
  
2. When did the Great fire of London start?
  - a) December 5th, 1786
  - b) September 2nd, 1666
  - c) September, 12th, 1966
  
3. What is the name of the mayor of London?
  - a) Sir Matiew Bloodworth
  - b) Sir Oscar Bloodworth
  - c) Sir Thomas Bloodworth
  
4. What was the name of the river that people jumped into?
  - a) Tamesis
  - b) Nilo
  - c) Volga
  
5. What kind of shop fire started?
  - a) Kings's Bakery
  - b) Thomas' Bakery
  - c) Lilith's Bakery
  
6. How many houses collapsed in the fire?
  - a) 400
  - b) 70,000
  - c) 300
  
7. What was the last resource you used to ask for help?
  - a) Screams
  - b) fireworks
  - c) water
  
8. People tried to leave the city and poured down to the River Thames in an attempt to escape by boat.
  - a) True
  - b) False
  - c) We don't know

9. how many people had died?
  - a) Five people
  - b) Twenty people
  - c) Six people
  
10. When did the great fire of London extinguish?
  - a) September 6th, 1666
  - b) We don't know
  - c) Never
  
11. The city was rebuilt following a new Street design.
  - a) True
  - b) False
  - c) We don't know
  
12. Who was caught in flames?
  - a) St. Patrick
  - b) St. Paul
  - c) St. Antonio
  
13. On what date was the fire completely extinguished?
  - a) 7th September
  - b) 8th September
  - c) 6th September
  
14. How many private homes were destroyed?
  - a) 13,000 private dwellings
  - b) 23,000 private dwellings
  - c) 31,000 private dwellings
  
15. Where was the monument made?
  - a) Pudding Lane
  - b) New York
  - c) England