

# The Great Fire of London





**The famous 'Great Fire of London' started on Sunday 2 September 1666 in a bakers shop.**



**The shop was in 'Pudding Lane' and belonged to Thomas Faynor who baked for the King.**



**The baker forgot to put out the fire he used to bake bread. Some fire wood was set alight and the fire began.**



**The buildings in London at the time were made of wood and had thatched roofs so they burnt very easily.**



The Great Fire of London, 1666. Lieve Verschuer.

**The buildings were also very close together, so the fire spread from one street to another quickly.**



**The very strong wind blowing also helped the fire to spread quickly across the city of London.**



**There were no firemen or fire engines so people tried to put the fire out with buckets of water.**





Old St. Paul's on Fire.

**The fire destroyed many buildings in London. They were later rebuilt using bricks instead of wood.**



**Samuel Pepys kept a diary of what he saw during the fire. He watched the fire from across the River Thames.**

Published by Authority.

From Monday, Septemb. 3. to Monday, Septemb. 10. 1666.

The ordinary course of this Paper having been interrupted by a Sad and Lamentable Accident of Fire lately happened in the City of London: It hath become the duty for publishing the minds of many of His Majesty's good Subjects, who much needs be concerned for the safety of so great an Accident, to give this their best and true Account of it.

On the second instant at One of the Clock in the Morning, there hapned to break out a Sad & Deplorable Fire, in a Building near New Fish-Street, which falling out at the heart of the night, and in a quarter of the Town full of people with wooden pitched houses, spread it self to the twelve days, and with such distraction to the Inhabitants and Neighbourhood, that care was not taken for the timely preventing the further diffusion of it by pulling down houses, as might have been, so that this lamentable Fire in a short time became too big to be mastered by any Engines or working here it. It fell out most unhappily too, that a violent Easterly Wind followed it, and kept it burning all that day, and the night following spreading it self up to Grace-Church-Street, and downwards from a compass to the Water-side as far as the Tower Church in the Evening.

The People in all parts about it distracted by the violence of it, and their particular care to carry away their Goods, many attempts were made to prevent the spreading of it, by pulling down Houses, and making great fire-works, but all in vain, the Fire rising upon the Timber and Rubbish, and to continue it self, even through thicke fumes, and ending in a bright Flame all Monday and Tuesday notwithstanding His Majesty's own, and His Royal Highness's indefatigable and personal pains to apply all possible remedies to prevent it, calling upon and helping the people with their Guards, and a great number of Artillery and Gunners unwearyingly assisting therein, for which they were rewarded with a thousand blessings from the most distressed people. By the favour of God the Wind blowed a little on Thursday night, and the Flames meeting with the assistance of the Temple, by little and little it was not good to lose its force on that side, so that on Wednesday morning began to hope well and His Royal Highness's never desisting or slackning his Personal Care, brought so well that day assisted in some parts by the Lords of the Council before and behind it, that a stop was put to it at the Temple-Church, near Holborn-Bridge, Piccadilly, in a place called the lower end of Coleman-Street, at the end of Bishop-Hatfield's, by the Palace, at the upper end of Abchurch-Lane, and London-Mall-Street, at the westward in Cornhill, at the Church in Pauls-Church-yard, near Fishmongers-hall in Monck-Lane, at the middle of New-Lane, and at the Tower-Dock.

On Thursday by the blessing of God it was wholly beat down and extinguished; but so as that Evening it unhappily fell out again at the Temple, by the falling of the sparks (as was supposed) from a Pile of Wooden Timber, but His Royal Highness's, who watched there the whole night in Person, by the great Labour and vigilance used, and especially by applying Powder to blow up the Houses about it, before day stood happily unspread.

Several Strangers, Dutch and French, were, during the Fire, apprehended, who were such that they contributed much thereby to it, who are all imprisoned, and Informations

prepared to make a severe Insurrection thence by my Lord Chief Justice Keeling, assisted by some of the Lords of the Privy Council, and four principal Members of the City, notwithstanding which suspensions, the manner of the burning all along in 7 Trunks, and blown forwards in all ways by strong Winds, maketh us conclude the whole was an effect of an unhappy chance, or to speak better, the heavy hand of God upon us for our Sin, flowing out of the terror of His Judgment in thus raising the fire, and immediately after, His merciful and never enough to be acknowledged Mercy, in putting a stop to it, when we were in the last degree, and that all attempts for the quenching it, however industriously pursued, seemed ineffectual. His Majesty then for hearily in Council, and ever since hath continued making rounds about the City in all parts of it where the danger and mischief was greatest, till this Morning that he hath from His Grace the Duke of Albemarle, whom he hath called for to assist him in this great occasion, to put his Happy and Successful Hand to the finishing this memorable Deliverance.

About the Tower, the feasonable Orders given for plucking down Houses to secure the Magazines of Powder, was more especially successful, that Part being up the Wind, notwithstanding which, it came almost to the very Gates of War lodged in the Tower were entirely saved: And we have further this infinite cause particularly to give God thanks that the fire did not happen in any of those places where his Majesty's Naval Stores are kept, so as though he had pleased God to visit us with his own hand, he hath not, by disarming us with the means of carrying on the War, subjected us to our Enemies.

It must be observed, That this Fire happened in a part of the Town, where though the Commodities were not very rich, yet they were so bulky, that they could not well be removed, so that the Inhabitants of that part where it first began have sustained very great loss: But by the best Enquiry we can make the other parts of the Town, where the Commodities were of greater value, took the Alarm so early, that they saved most of their Goods of value, which possibly may have diminished the loss, though some think that if the whole industry of the Inhabitants had been applied to the stopping of the Fire, and not to the saving of their particular Goods, the success might have been much better, not only to the Publick, but to many of them in their own Particulars.

Though this sad Accident it is easy to be imagined how many persons were necessitated to remove themselves and Goods into the open Fields, where they were forced to continue some time, which could not but work compassion in the beholders, but His Majesty's Care was most signal in this occasion, who, besides His Personal Pains, was frequent in Consulting all ways for relieving these distressed persons, which produced so good effect, as well by His Majesty's Proclamations, and the Orders issued to the Neighbour Justices of the Peace to encourage the lending in Provisions to the Marlers, which are probably known, as by other Directions, that when His Majesty, seeing that other Orders might not yet have been sufficient, had Commanded the Virtualler of his Navy to send Bread into open-Fields for the relief of the Poor, which for the more speedy supply, he sent in Baskets out of the Sea Stores; it was found that the Marlers had

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been already so well supplied, that the people, being unaccustomed to that kind of Bread, declined it, and so it was returned in great part to his Majesty's Stores again, without any sale at all.

And we cannot but observe, to the satisfaction of all his Majesty's enemies, who endeavour to persuade the world abroad of great parties and dissensions in some against his Majesty's Government; That a greater instance of the affections of this City, could never be shown when hath been given from this sad and deplorable Accident, when in any time did our City, by any appearance in all things, it has been so far from any appearance of dissensions or attempts against his Majesty's Government, that his Majesty and his Royal Brother, out of their care to prevent the fire, respectively exposing their persons with very small assistance in all parts of the Town, sometimes even to be intermixed with those who laboured in the business, yet nevertheless there hath been observed so much as a murmuring word to fall from any, but on the contrary, even those persons whose losses rendered their conditions most desperate, and so to be objects of others prayers, beholding those frequent instances of his Majesty's care of his people, forget their own misery, and filled the streets with their prayers for his Majesty, whose tenderness they seemed to compassionate before thought of.

Monday, Aug. 10. Since a day passed wherein some Prices are not bought in by our Privy-council, among the rest, one of them of six Guns, has lately fallen on a very young man, who was bound for Denmark, and in going there (as 'tis said) a Nicotian of the King's name, Mr. Sackville, Sept. 3. A French Vessel called the Hope of Guelders laden with 1799 Barrels of Butter, and 4000 Pipes of Lead, was put aboard about a League to the Southward of this Town, and fell in pieces, but the Goods are most of them saved and preserved for the Owners, it being one of those vessels that brought over the Lord Daugla's Regiment, and was prevented to land here.

Tuesday, Sept. 4. Yesterday arrived here 2 Olerias laden with Salt, from the North, from whence they came the 16. of August last, and report the Dutch Boats were then there with his Fleet of about 40 Sails, great and small, Men of war, and Fire-ships, whereof 3 Dutch, and were making all the preparations they could for the Sea, but their guns were unaccused.

Wednesday, Sept. 5. On Friday morning arrived here the Signoria de la Gracia, a Venetian Vessel, hired by Mr. A. B. who was laden with Currants and Oyle at 200 and 300 Tuns, and were bound for London, by the way the Venetians, Maldivians, and other Italians, with whom she was bound, designed the destruction of the Merchants and their belonging to Spain, intending afterwards to carry off the Ship with its freight, and in execution of their purpose had fallen upon the Merchants, who they wounded in several places, and had undoubtedly killed him, but that Captain Loy in the Pilgrims, a Privateer, came by Providence to his rescue, and seizing their principals, secured them from further attempts.

Thursday, Sept. 6. On the first instant, a small French Vessel with Ballast, taken by one of our Frigates, was sent to hisher, and by the way ran on ground in the storm, but by the assistance of several persons she got off, being rescued whilst the Lighthouse of all her Rigging, Sails, and Tackle.

Friday, Aug. 28. On the 14. instant, his Grace, the Lord Lovelace, came late to Kifford, intending from thence to visit all the most considerable places in his shire. The Lord Chancellor is well recovered, and was yesterday abroad, and intends speedily to follow. All Countries are in very good order, the Taxes no more heard of, and the Militias generally settled in a very good posture.

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Nov. 6, Septemb. 6. The account of our Bill of Mortality for this last week, runs thus; Buried all in October 1666. Whereof of the Plague 147. Buried at the Pest-house 12.

Perfrench, Septemb. 7. Yesterday his Grace the Lord General parted hence for London, leaving the Fleet retired after their late Return; and ready to put to Sea again with the first fair wind.

Office is hereby given, That Sir Robert Viner is now settled in the officers house near the middle of Broad-street London, where he intends to manage his affairs as formerly in Lambeth-street leaving to his good providence the care of his business, and leaving to his good providence of all his concerns, about twenty four hours before the Justice Five entered Lambeth-street.

Also Alderman Meyeswell, and Alderman Backwell, who were chosen of Lambeth-street, being likewise preferred in this Office, do intend to sit in a few days in our next Court.

The general Post-Office is for the present held at the two Black Pillars in Bridgewater-street over against the Fleet-Street in Queen's Garden, till a more convenient place can be found in London.

Apple-chutes in St. Alstons Road, Sept. 2. The post, by six in the morning our Fleet weighed anchor at 8 o'clock, but proving a calm and the tide against us, were forced to come again to an Anchor, before we had made a League of way, and so laid that day without the intelligence of the Enemy.

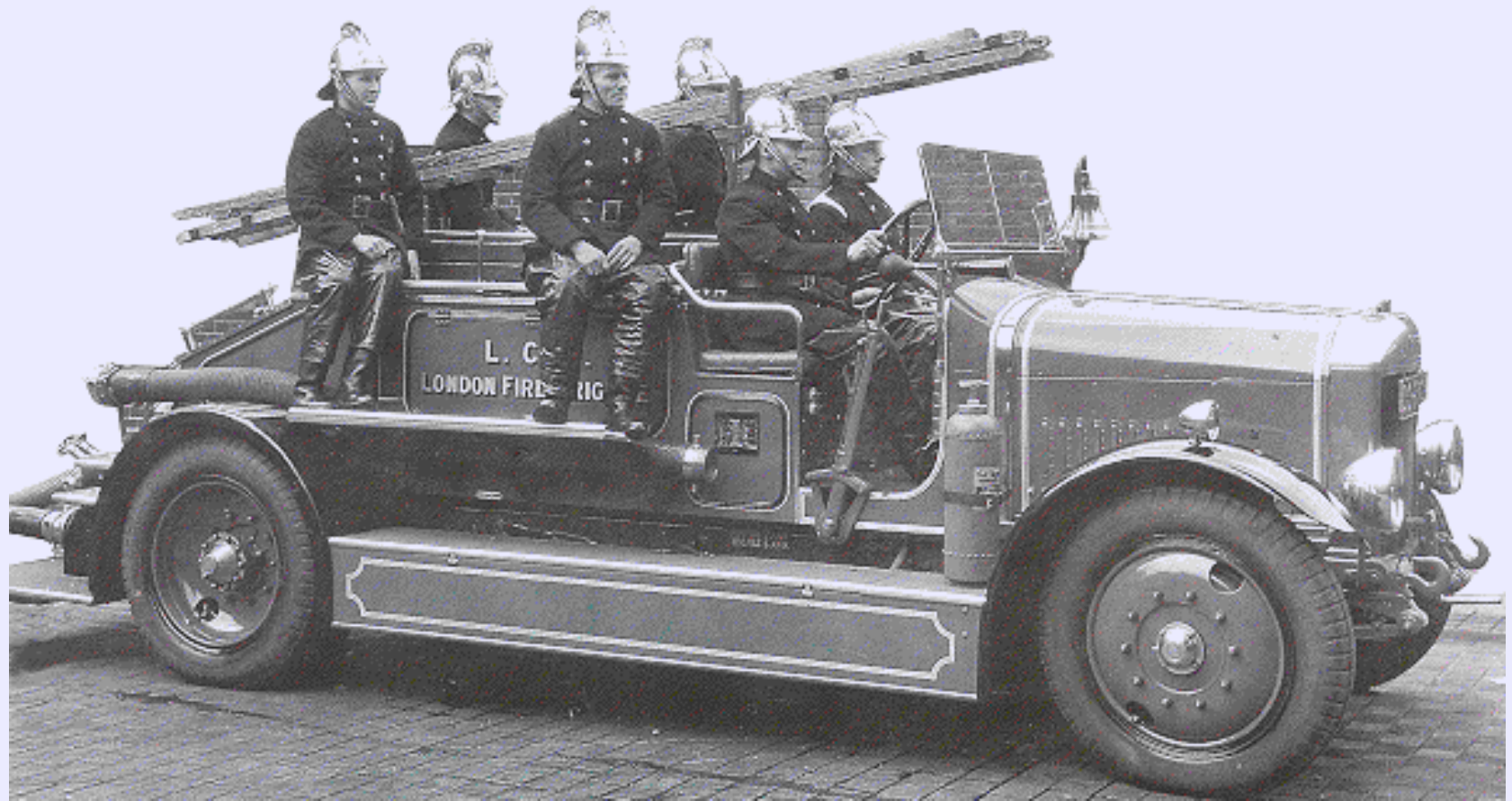
The 11. of 9. in the morning we were under sail, and stood a Course towards the one of Cadix, till about 11. at noon, when off Bissy Cliff we discovered the Enemy bearing S. and by E. whereupon we steered S. E. being assisted by the Vice-Admiral, who was clear of the Gallies, but were not so well, but that this Ship struck upon the sand, but was so fortunate as to get off again without prejudice: Which Stop brought us into better order to meet the Enemy, with the White Squadron in the Van, and the Blue in the Rear, till 12. at night, keeping the Wind, at which time we quest the Dutch were ahead, seeing them near us, and some of our Ships were chased, and the Enemy firing which made us neck also, and stand to the Northward.

Sept. 3. We saw the Vice-Admiral of the Blow to the Northward with some few Ships, and finding the Dutch were gone away from us towards Cadix, we shot at Caspale after them, and found some of them newly Arrived, and others standing in, but as our approach, they got all under sail, and stood for Cadix, we shot at Caspale to the North, being fore to weather us, if we past the Point, the Wind then E. by N. and E. by N. as much as we could carry our top sails half mast high: Whereupon we lay by, fore of the place, till all our Fleet came up; but then the storm growing greater, and having no hopes, by reason of the ill weather, of attempting farther upon the Enemy, who durst not adventure out of the shelter of the shore, it was found best to lay by, and bring the Fleet together, and the next day to break our Retreat to St. Helen Bay, the place appointed for our Rendezvous, as the most proper situation to hinder the Enemies conjunction with the French, we being ready with the first fair Wind to seek out the Enemy.

In the storm two of our Ships struck upon the Riprapes sands, etc. the Andrew and the Hope Return, but got well off again: The rest of our Fleet in good condition, What loss the Enemy sustained by the storm we know not, only we are assured, they were forced to blow up one of their greatest Ships; another a Flag-Ship wholly disabled, was seen driving before the wind; and that several others of them were much damaged and disabled: and of the rest, four we could get run upon the Sands, and with great difficulty got off again.

Dutch, 8. Sept. This afternoon the Dutch Fleet weighed from Ballew Road, and are now standing towards their own Coast.

The fire continued burning for four days. Lacking only 4 people were reported to have died.



**After the fire a fire service was set up in London to make sure that it did not happen again.**



**A statue was made to remember the 'Great Fire of London'. It still stands in London today.**