

The Great Fire of London: A City Reborn

Step back into 1666 and discover how Ellie the Elephant uncovered the secrets of a city rising from the ashes!

- The blaze ignited in a small bakery on Pudding Lane during the early hours of Sunday, 2nd September 1666, quickly spreading due to the strong easterly winds and cramped, wooden housing.
- London's medieval streets were narrow and packed with timber-framed buildings coated in flammable pitch, which acted like fuel for the rapidly growing inferno.
- To stop the fire from jumping across streets, citizens and soldiers used fire hooks to pull down houses, creating 'firebreaks' that deprived the flames of anything new to burn.
- The disaster forced a major change in urban planning; the Rebuilding of London Act 1667 decreed that new houses must be constructed from brick or stone rather than wood.
- Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to redesign the city, most famously replacing the ruined medieval cathedral with the magnificent St Paul's Cathedral that still dominates the skyline today.

Did you know? Did you know? Despite the fire destroying over 13,000 houses and 87 churches, the official death toll was recorded as remarkably low. Historians today argue that many deaths of poorer citizens might have gone unrecorded during the chaos, making the true human cost of the disaster a mystery Ellie the Elephant is still investigating!

Key vocabulary: Pudding Lane · Bakery · Timber-framed · Conflagration · Monarchy · Restoration · St Paul's Cathedral · Architecture