

Samuel Pepys' Diary



Sunday 2nd September 1666

I was woken by my servant Jane, she was awfully scared of something and talking rather louder than one should at such an early hour. She dragged me over to the window and once I had rubbed the sleepy-dust from my eyes I saw what all the fuss was about. There was the distant, orange glow of a fire miles away, not close enough to scare me. I told Jane not to worry and went back to bed.

When I woke later on that day the fire was still glowing, but the glow had grown! I climbed a hill and watched in horror as I saw that more and more houses were catching fire, the houses of London were built tight to each other and all were made of wood so the fire was jumping from house to house leaving destruction in its wake!



I sailed down the Thames in my boat to see King Charles II and tell him about the fire, it was getting beyond control! The King told the Mayor of London to pull down some buildings to stop the fire and the King's brother, the Duke of York sent some soldiers to put out the fire. As I go to bed on this first day of the fire I hope that the Duke and the Mayor put the fire out during the night.



Monday 3rd September 1666

I woke up to find the weather was still hot and dry and the wind had blown the fire even further over the city!

The Mayor, who was meant to be stopping the fire, had run away and left the city. The coward!

The horrid smell of smoke filled the air and the Thames was full of boats with people and all of their possessions piled up inside.

Everyone was very scared, poor Jane could not stop her crying.

By the evening of the second day of the fire it was nearly at the Tower! The Tower of London where many of my rich friends had hidden their expensive treasure from the fire!



Tuesday 4th September 1666

Oh, what a terrible day, the fire has become a raging inferno and spread through the city like a tidal wave because of the wind!

Even St. Paul's Cathedral was destroyed by the fire! The soldiers managed to stop the Tower of London from being burnt by blowing up the houses around it using gun-powder. I can hear the crackle of flames from my bedroom and horizon is filled with black smoke and red flame.

Today the fire won.



Wednesday 5th September 1666

I woke this morning to find the wind had stopped blowing. Oh joy! The soldier's had been busily pulling down houses to create fire-breaks and stop the fire from spreading and they had finally got it under control.

By the evening, the fire had been put out but 87 churches had been burnt down including St. Paul's and over 13,000 houses were destroyed. People were camping outside London waiting for it to be rebuilt.

But thank god that only 6 people lost their lives to the fire, it is a miracle in a city so big!