

Contents and background information

# Great Fire of London collections



# Great Fire of London resources collection

## Artefacts:

**Nightshirt** - for re-enactment of the story



**Leather fireman's helmet**



How much protection from falling debris or flames do children think this would offer?

**If you are brave enough you can try the items below with water!**

**Leather buckets x 2**

These would have been passed hand to hand along a human chain to carry water from the river to burning buildings. How



much water do children think would be left in the buckets to throw over the fire by the time they reached it? **You could try a bucket line – using modern buckets too.**

**Laminated image of a 17th century squirt / syringe**

Huge metal squirts were used to fight the fire. They were operated by three men, two to carry and aim the squirt and one to operate the piston to force the water out. They had leather seals so probably did not hold their water very well either. Can children think what problems there would be with these? (Refilling, carrying, aiming)



**You could try using modern water-play squirts to demonstrate how these would work.**

**Inkwell, quill and sand shaker pot**

The diarists, Pepys and Evelyn who witnessed and wrote about the fire are the sources of much of our information about it. These are the type of implements with which they would have written. The perforated pot that is rather like a large pepper pot would have been filled with fine, dry sand to dry the ink and prevent it from smudging.



**Gentleman's C17th century wig and neck ruff**

Can be used by you or your pupils to role play various characters associated with the story e.g. the Lord Mayor, King Charles II, Sir Christopher Wren or the diarists Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn.



**Phoenix firemark warning very heavy**

After the Great Fire, fire insurance companies sprang up – the forerunners of today's insurance companies. These promised to protect your home or business in the event of fire. However the company's fire engines would go straight past any buildings not displaying their company's mark on the door.



## Great Fire character paddle masks



L-R - the baker Thomas Farynor, King Charles II, Sir Christopher Wren, Samuel Pepys  
For role-play, debates and other activities e.g. 'Who said what?'

## Resources for sequencing and retelling the story:

These resources can be used individually or together.

### Great Fire story and 13 accompanying illustrations – see picture details opposite

Can be used for:

- A washing line story exercise. Blue phrases in the story provided indicate that there is an illustration for that part of the story and give the number of the matching picture. Each picture gets pegged to the washing line as the story reaches that point, to form a pictorial story.
- The pictures can also be used for retelling the story or parts of it. The class could create captions for each picture to produce their own version of the story.
- As evidential sources for additional work on e.g. fire fighting methods.

### Set of 7 A5 laminated picture cards



## Other resources:

### Map of London showing the affected area



### A2 poster St Paul's amidst the flames



### Diary extracts from Pepys and Evelyn (with adapted transcripts on reverse)

**Diary extract of Samuel Pepys**  
My maid Jane called up about three in the morning, to tell us of great fire this side of the City. So I rose and dressed as my night gown did want to her window, and thought I to be on the back side of Mark Lane on the farthest out, being unused to such fire as followed. I thought it far enough to, and so went to bed soon, and to sleep.

By and by Jane came and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down tonight by the fire, and that it is now burning close to Fish Street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower and there I did see the houses at the end of the bridge all on fire.

I rode down to the water-side, ... and there saw a remarkable fire, ... endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters that lay off poor people's shops in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one part of shop by the another to another, and among other things, the poor people, I perceive, were left to leave their houses, but however about the windows and balconies, till they some of them burned their wings and fell down.

Having passed, and on horse back seen the fire rage every way, and nobody to my right endeavouring to open a kiln, to Whitehall and more so to the back side of the Chapel, where I did give them an account that I observed them all, and the word was carried into the King, so I did called for one did call him, and have of them what I saw, and then returned to my house, did command houses to be pulled down, nothing could stop the fire. They covered much trouble, and the King commanded me to go to the Lord Mayor from him, and command him to spare no houses.

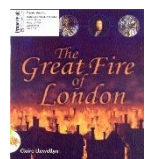
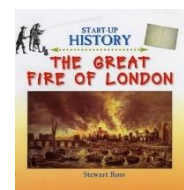
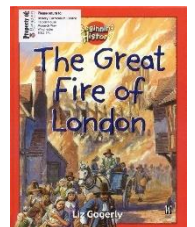
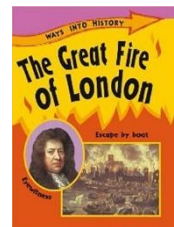
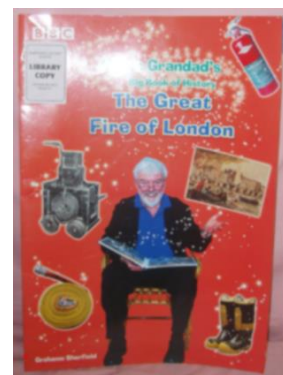
**Diary extract of John Evelyn (1622-1706)**  
September 2. 1666. This fatal night about ten began that deplorable fire near Fish streete ...

[September 3] I saw the whole South part of the City burning. There was nothing saved but crumpled & burnt rags, & running about like detached courtesans ... Have we now the Thousand count with ... all the houses & booths laden with what some had time and courage to save ... all the sick were of a fiery aspect, like the top of a burning Chert, & the light smoke above 40 miles round about. For many nights God grant mine eyes may never behold this like, who now see above ten thousand houses all in one flame, the noise & crackling & thunder of the impetuous flames, the shrieking of Women & children, the hurly of people, the fall of towers, houses and churches was like an hideous storm, & the smoke all about so hot & so fast that at the last one was not able to approach it ... The clouds of smoke were small, & reached ... scarce 50 miles in length.

[September 4] The burning still rages ... but the courage of the multitude prevailing, & combustible houses blown up with Gunpowder, such gaps & desolations were sooner made.

[September 7] I went this morning on Foote from White Hall to for London bridge, with an extraordinary difficulty, clambering over ruins of yet smoking rubbish, & frequently mistaking where I was, the ground so soft, as made me not only sweat, but even burnt the soles of my shoes.

### BBC Magic Grandad Great Fire of London Big Book and 4 other Information books



Please ensure that books are not inadvertently mixed in with your class / school's resources.