

9th September 1666

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Samuel Pepys tells all!

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Yesterday I sat down with Samuel Pepys and asked him some questions about the things he saw during the Great Fire.

As we all know, Mr Pepys lives in London and he saw all that was going on. He wrote about the fire in his diary and he was the first one to tell the king about what was going on.

I asked Mr Pepys how he first heard about the fire.

He said, “I was in bed when my maid came to tell me. She seemed very worried but I didn’t care. I thought it wouldn’t burn for very long”.

Then I asked Mr Pepys what was the first thing he did when he realised it really was a big and dangerous fire.



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He replied, “The first thing I did was to go to the Tower of London. I wanted to go somewhere really high so that I could get a good view of the whole of London. When I got up there I couldn’t believe my eyes! The whole city was a blazing inferno! The bright orange flames were at least 30 feet high and the smoke was so thick that I thought I might choke! After that, I watched the uncontrollable fire from the banks of the River Thames. I could see the reflection of the flames dancing on the surface of the rippling water. The water looked yellow and glimmering because of the vicious fire nearby. I heard terrified children crying because they were being put into boats and they didn’t know why. ”

Next I asked Mr Pepys whether he was worried about his own home.

He said, “I started to become worried when I realised that the fire was out of control. We couldn’t get enough water with just the squirts and the leather buckets, nor was there any rain. I decided to bury my expensive wine and cheese so that it wouldn’t burn. I also went to see the King and it was my idea to start pulling down houses and blowing them up.”

After 4 days of the dreadful fire, we are all glad to see that it is finally out. I asked Mr Pepys how he thought we might re-build our city.

“I don’t know,” he said, “but I know it won’t be quick. It’s going to take a long time to get back to normal”.