

# Nell Saunders' Diary

by Gabrielle Kent

Thursday 6th September, 1666

Dear Diary,

It has been five days since my last entry and I can hardly believe what has happened in that time.

Early on Sunday morning, a fire started in Thomas Farriner's bakery on Pudding Lane. Father said we were safe, it would never reach our house half a mile away. I decided to go out to see it. The streets were busier than I have ever seen them. People were dragging sacks of belongings out of their doors then loading them onto carts. Terrified children cried in their parents' arms as they were carried to safety. Whole rows of streets were burning. Fiery embers floated on the scorching breeze, spreading the fire. I had never been so frightened in my life.

When I got back home, every house on the other side of our street was gone. The King and Mr Samuel Pepys had ordered them to be pulled down to break the path of the fire. I hoped it would work because it seemed the whole of London was burning.

By Tuesday, the fire was so close that all I could see from my window was flaming buildings and towering columns of smoke. We couldn't stay in our house any longer. I helped Mother and Father hide some valuables under the floor then we hurried down to the Thames. Thousands of people were huddled on the riverbanks, their faces grey with ash. We slept on Father's boat for two nights and washed in cold river water.

By Thursday, the fire had finally burned out. We went to see the remains of our home and were amazed to find it still standing! Mr Pepys' plan had stopped the fire. I couldn't believe how lucky we were to have survived the greatest fire London has ever seen.