

The use of the major firefighting technique of the time, the creation of firebreaks by means of demolition, was critically delayed owing to the indecisiveness of the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Bloodworth. By the time large-scale demolitions were ordered on Sunday night, the wind had already fanned the bakery fire into a firestorm which defeated such measures.

The fire pushed north on Monday into the heart of the City. Order in the streets broke down as rumours arose of suspicious foreigners setting fires. The fears of the homeless focused on the French and Dutch, England's enemies in the ongoing Second Anglo-Dutch War; these substantial immigrant groups became victims of lynchings and street violence. On Tuesday, the fire spread over most of the City, destroying St Paul's Cathedral and leaping the River Fleet to threaten Charles II's court at Whitehall, while coordinated firefighting efforts were simultaneously mobilising. The battle to quench the fire is considered to have been won by two factors: the strong east winds died down, and the Tower of London garrison used gunpowder to create effective firebreaks to halt further spread eastward.

The social and economic problems created by the disaster were overwhelming. Evacuation from London and resettlement elsewhere were strongly encouraged by Charles II, who feared a London rebellion amongst the dispossessed refugees. Despite numerous radical proposals, London was reconstructed on essentially the same street plan used before the fire.

1. Many suburban slums were burnt down

- a. True.
- b. False.
- c. We don't know.

2. How many inhabitants had their homes destroyed?

- a. 13,200.
- b. 70,000.
- c. 80,000.

3. There were many deaths recorded.

- a. True.
- b. False.
- c. We don't know.

4. The Lord Mayor of London decided to demolish the burnt buildings to control the fire.

- a. True.
- b. False.
- c. We don't know.

5. The city was rebuilt following a new street design.

- a. True.
- b. False.
- c. We don't know.

