

Firefighters

Then and Now



The Great Fire of London

Over 350 years ago, there was a fire in London. It started in a baker's shop on Pudding Lane on Sunday 2nd September 1666.

All of the houses and shops were made from wood and they were built very close together. This meant that the fire spread quickly.



The Great Fire of London

There was no fire service so lots of people tried to put the fire out.

They only had leather buckets, which they filled with water, axes, fire hooks and squirters.

Leather buckets had to be passed from person to person in a long chain to get the water from the river to the burning buildings.



The Great Fire of London

Gunpowder was sometimes used to create a 'fire break', where houses were blown up to try to stop the fire spreading.

The fire burnt for days. When the fire went out, many houses and shops in London were destroyed.



The items they used



Leather bucket

People created human chains and collected water from the River Thames using a bucket, passed it along and threw it over the fire.



Fire Hook

Fire hooks were long metal sticks with a sharp hook at the end. They were used to pull down the houses to create a 'fire break' so that the fire couldn't spread to the next house.

Water Squirt

Water squirts were filled with water from the River Thames and could squirt water exactly where it was needed.



Gunpowder

On the 3rd day of the fire, the people of London used gunpowder to blow up houses to stop the fire spreading to other houses.



The Earliest Fire Service

After the Great Fire of London, people wanted to make sure that there would never be a fire like this again. New buildings were made from bricks so they wouldn't burn so quickly and the streets were widened.

One year after the Great Fire of London, the first fire service was set up. They would go to a fire and put it out if people needed them. This fire service didn't put every fire out, though. Instead, they only went to the homes of people who had paid them money to look after (insure) their house. The fire brigades put a 'fire mark' on each house that had paid to be looked after (insured).



The Earliest Fire Service

In 1833, ten fire brigades in London joined together to make one fire service which later became the London Fire Brigade. Eventually, the government passed a law that meant every county in the UK had their own fire brigade.



Uniforms and Equipment

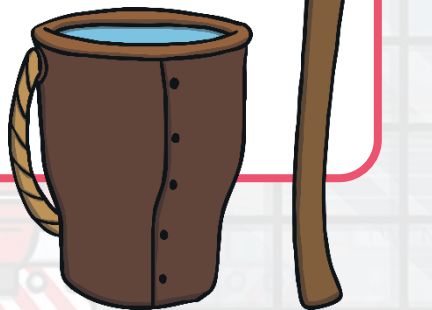
1666 – The Great Fire of London

Uniform

- no uniform
- no fire service

Equipment

- leather buckets
- axes
- squirters
- fire hooks



Firefighters Today

Today, firefighting is very different to when it started.

Uniform

Today's uniform is a golden colour. It is made from a special, protective material. This means that firefighters are protected against fire and any spillages.

Firefighters wear helmets which have a built-in torch.

Radios are worn so firefighters can speak to each other.



Firefighters Today

Vehicles

The fire service uses large fire engines. Fire brigades are hoping that, in the future, some of these will be powered by electricity because this will cut down pollution.



Firefighters Today

Technology

Firefighters wear a tracking device, which connects to a computer and tells other firefighters exactly where they are.

Firefighters carry a thermal imaging camera. This is a special camera that shows a firefighter how warm things are. It is very useful when there is so much smoke or darkness that firefighters can't see clearly.



Firefighters Today

Shifts

Firefighters work long hours during the day and all through the night. These shifts mean that there is always someone able to come and fight a fire at any time of the day or night when you call 999.

