

## The Great Plague of London in Pepys' Diary

**S**amuel Pepys' diary gives us fantastic evidence about life in London during the Great Plague. The Great Plague of London broke out in the spring of 1665. Deaths gradually increased during the summer. More than 40,000 Londoners died.

### 30 April 1665

Great fear of the sickness here in the city, it being said that two or three houses are already shut up. God preserve us all.

### 7 June 1665

This day, much against my will, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and 'lord have Mercy Upon Us' writ there – which was a sad sight to me, being the first of that kind... that I ever saw.

### 10 June 1665

To my great trouble, hear that the plague is come into the city... but where should it begin but in my good friend and neighbour's Dr. Burnett in Fenchurch Street... To my bed, being troubled at the sickness... and particularly how to put my things and estate in order, in case it should please God to call me away.

### 12 August 1665

The people die so, that it now seems they are willing to carry the dead to be buried by daylight, the nights not being long enough to do it.

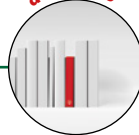
And my Lord Mayor commands people to be inside by nine at night that the sick may leave their domestic prison for air and exercise.

### 22 August 1665

I went on a walk to Greenwich, on my way seeing a coffin with a dead body in it, dead of plague. It lay in an open yard... it was carried there last night, and the parish has not told anybody to bury it. This disease makes us more cruel to one another than we are to dogs.



### activities



#### ↓ TEXT COMPREHENSION

Answer the following questions.

- 1 When did the plague start to spread in London?
- 2 Why were some houses marked with a red cross?
- 3 Who was one of the first to be hit by the plague?
- 4 Why did Pepys decide to put all his things in order?
- 5 Why did they start to bury the dead during the day?
- 6 Why does Pepys say that the plague makes people cruel to one another?

#### ↓ WEBSEARCH

Have you ever heard of any other plague epidemics? Are there any places in the world where plague is still a threat? Gather some information about it and write a short report.