

The Globe Theatre

The Globe Theatre Fire

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In 1613, the Globe was destroyed by fire on the 29th of June. During the play, "Henry the V" a small spark from a cannon accidentally caught the roof on fire, and in less than an hour the Globe Theatre had burnt to the ground. Within about one year, a new theatre was built and completed in 1614, but later the Puritans tore the theatre down because they believed that theatres were evil and should not have existed. Nowadays, instead of the Globe Theatre, there only stands a pub. An eyewitness account of the fire was given by Sir Henry Wotton, in a letter dated July 2nd, 1613.

"... I will entertain you at the present with what happened this week at the Banks side. The King's players had a new play called All is True, representing some principal pieces of the reign of Henry the Eighth, which set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and

majesty even to the matting of the stage; the knights of the order with their Georges and Garter, the guards with their embroidered coats, and the like: sufficient in truth within awhile to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous. Now King Henry making a Masque at the Cardinal Wolsey's house, and certain cannons being shot off at his entry, some of the paper or other stuff, wherewith one of them was stopped, did light on the thatch, where being thought at first but idle smoak, and their eyes more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly, and ran round like a train, consuming within less than an hour the whole house to the very ground. This was the fatal period of that virtuous fabrick, wherein yet nothing did perish but wood and straw, and a few forsaken cloaks; only one man had his breeches set on fire, that would perhaps have broyled him, if he had not by the benefit of a provident wit, put it out with a bottle of ale."

The Globe Theatre being made of wood caused the fire to spread quickly. To get to the stairs to evacuate the theatre, the audience would have to walk behind the wooden benches through each of the galleries. There would have been a lot of panic to evacuate, as there were no planned controls for evacuation. There are no records of a death toll or the exact numbers of the injured, but the eyewitness accounts state this is because there were none!

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