



The Gunpowder Plot



Timeline

1570	1603	May 1604	March 1605	October 1605	Nov. 1605	Jan. 1606
Guy Fawkes born in York on April 13th	King James I crowned King of England	Guy Fawkes meets others regarding the Gunpowder Plot in the Duck and Drake pub in London	Guy Fawkes rents a cellar located under the House of Lords and starts to fill it with gunpowder	Lord Monteagle receives a letter forewarning him of something terrible happening on 5 th November	Guy Fawkes arrested in the basement of the House of Lords	Guy Fawkes put to death

Key Vocabulary

anonymous	not identified by name; of unknown name
barrel	cylindrical container, traditionally made of wood
Catholic	of the Roman Catholic religious faith, including Christians
conspirators	people who take part in plots or schemes together
confession	admitting that one is guilty of a crime, lie or wrongdoing
effigy	a sculpture or model of a person (in this case 'Guy' on a bonfire)
flee	run away from a place or situation of danger
government	group of people with authority to control a country or state
gunpowder	explosive consisting of a powdered mixture
monarch	a sovereign head of state, such as a king or queen
Protestant	follower of Christianity, separate from Roman Catholic church
recruit	to enlist or enrol someone into a particular job or task
revolt	take violent action against an established government or ruler
smuggle	move items illegally or secretly from one place to another
torture	causing severe pain to someone as punishment
tunnel	some say they tried to build a tunnel from their house



DID YOU KNOW?



There were 36 barrels of gunpowder in the basement underneath the House of Lords, which was 25 times more than they needed to blow up the houses of Parliament!

General Knowledge

The Plot

A first meeting was on 20 May 1604 where Catesby was joined by his friends Thomas Wintour, Jack Wright and Thomas Percy at the Duck and Drake in London. The 5th person was Guy Fawkes. With Parliament successively postponed until 5th November 1605, over the next year the number of plotters gradually increased to ten. In March 1605 the group took out a lease on a ground-floor cellar close by a house they had rented. Still hoping for foreign support, Fawkes travelled back to Flanders. (Belgium) Unsuccessful, he was also spotted by English spies!

Guy Fawkes Torture and Confessions

On the night of 26th October, an anonymous letter was delivered to Lord Monteagle, warning him to avoid the opening of Parliament. When Guy Fawkes was captured, he originally claimed that he was called John Johnson. This was his made-up name when he pretended to be a caretaker. He was tortured and beaten, and eventually admitted his name along with the names of everyone else involved. He was sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered but during the public execution, he jumped from the ladder and instantly broke his neck.

Bonfire Night

Over four hundred years after the Gunpowder plot, we still remember how Guy Fawkes and his fellow plotters failed to blow up Parliament and kill King James I. Bonfire night is celebrated every year on 5th November. Bonfires, fireworks and sparklers are lit in parks and gardens all over the country. Sometimes we even burn a dummy called a 'Guy' on the bonfire. This is supposed to represent Guy Fawkes. It was actually law to 'remember' this day for around 250 years with an act of Parliament passed to make it a day of thanksgiving for the 'joyful deliverance of James I' from the 'evil' plotters.

Famous Figures

King James I (1566-1625)

In 1603 Elizabeth died and James I became king of England. He ordered all bishops to hunt down Catholics and in February 1604 he ordered that all priests should be removed from England. He also ordered the proper collection of fines imposed on Catholics that had yet to be collected.

Robert Catesby (1572-1605)

Born into wealth, Catesby was an accomplished swordsman. His father, William, spent much of his time in prison and his treatment by the government had an impact on Robert, who, like his father, was a Catholic. Catesby was the lead conspirator to blow up the houses of parliament but once the plot was foiled, he fled to Holbeche House in Staffordshire. The house was surrounded by troops on 8th November and he was shot and killed in a deadly shootout.

Guy Fawkes (1570-1606)

Guy Fawkes was born in York, England. His parents were Protestants but during his childhood Guy converted to Catholicism. When he was 21, he left England to join the Catholic Spanish army, where he fought in the Eighty Years War and became an expert in explosives. In 1594 he joined a group of fellow English Catholics, led by Robert Catesby, in a plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament in order to kill King James I and his Government. They were angry at the poor treatment of Catholics by the Protestant king. Fawkes was responsible for lighting the fuse to the barrels of gunpowder.