

On November the 5<sup>th</sup> every year many people take part in celebrations on 'Bonfire night' Maybe you have wrapped up warm, watched fireworks and stood around a bonfire. Perhaps you have even see a 'guy' put on the fire.

### Task

Why do we do this?

What are we 'celebrating'?

and should we be celebrating it at all?



# GUN-POWDER Plot:

O R,

A Brief Account of that bloody and subtle Design laid against the King, his Lords and Commons in Parliament, and of a Happy Deliverance by Divine Power.

To the Tune of *When will we ever see*

Licensed according to Order.



THese Spectacles I pray you be to me near,  
 When this Day look on these Car;  
 The Lords are gone through the Duke's Gate,  
 To see if it be not the best of all.  
 When James the first in England was put King,

at length, these wicked Rascals all agreed  
 To lay a trap to make the King and Commons bleed,  
 The Powder, all agreed both joint and severall,  
 To blow up both the King and Parliament.  
 So to keep secret this their Villainy,

# Remember, remember the fifth of November, Gunpowder, treason and plot...

I know of no reason,  
Why the gunpowder treason,  
Should ever be forgot.

Guy Fawkes, Guy Fawkes,  
T'was his intent,  
To blow up the King and Parliament,  
Three score barrels of powder below,  
To prove old England's overthrow,  
By God's providence he was catch'd,  
With a dark lantern and burning match.

# What really happened on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1605, and why?





James I was Protestant, the Catholics were optimistic that they would be treated better than they had been under previous monarchs. **Roller Coaster Recap**

However they were soon disappointed for the following reasons...

- James was a **devout** protestant.
- James failed to end the fines for non-attendance at church, and instead increased them.
- James publicly declared his utter 'detestation of Catholics.'
- James told Catholic priests to leave England or face execution

Catholics were furious... some were prepared to go to extremes...



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMLHau\\_rBJ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMLHau_rBJ8)

As we watch the following clip, try to answer as many of the questions on your sheet as possible. Don't worry if you miss something, between us, we'll fill it in.



## The Plot

Every year, the king or queen officially opened Parliament and most of the powerful people in the country would go to watch. In 1605, this ceremony was due to take place on 5<sup>th</sup> November. The plan, led by **Catesby** was to kill the king, seize his daughter Elizabeth and place her on the throne to be helped by Catholic advisers.



## What went wrong?

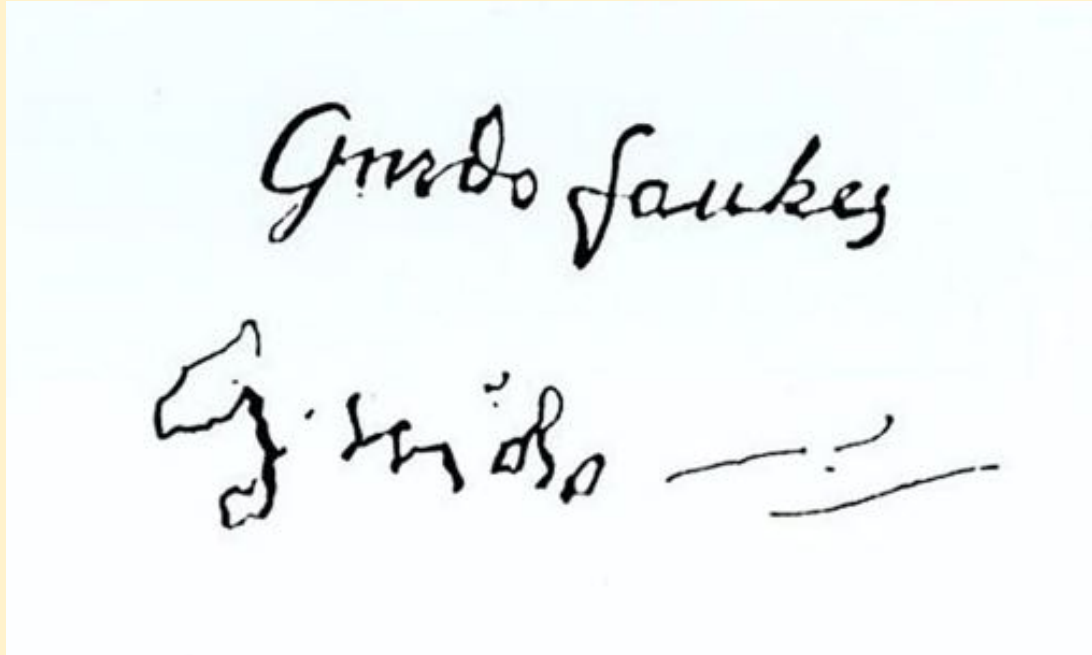
On 26<sup>th</sup> October a mysterious letter arrived at Lord Monteagle's house, it contained a warning not to go to Parliament. This letter was taken to the king and the plot was uncovered!

*"I would advise you... to devise some excuse to shift your attendance at the Parliament... they shall receive a terrible blow this Parliament and yet they shall not see who hurts them"*





In the early hours of 5 November, the cellars were searched a tall, brown haired man was found hanging around. He said his name was John Johnson and that he worked for Thomas Percy.



What do you think about this signature?

He was brought before the king but refused to answer any questions. He was then taken to the Tower of London and tortured finally admitting his name was Guido Fawkes. After 6 more days of torture he gave up the other plotters.

## The punishment

Following a shoot out between the king's men and the plotters where Catesby and Percy were killed by the same bullet, the rest were given a quick trial found guilty of treason and were sentenced to death.

They were dragged through the streets of London, hanged drawn and quartered. Their corpses were then cut up and put on display around the country as a warning against future plotting.



Why did James order such a severe public response?

Do you think the Catholics would have plotted against James anyway or was James responsible?

## In the back of your books – Quick Quiz

Who were the main leaders of the plot (x 3)?

John Wright, Thomas Percy, Guy Fawkes, Robert Catesby, Tresham, Thomas & Robert Winter, Christopher and John Wright

What date was it planned for?

5<sup>th</sup> November 1605

How many barrels of gunpowder were there?

36

How many plotters?

13

How was the plot foiled?

Tresham sent a letter to Lord Monteagle saying not to turn up on 5<sup>th</sup> Nov.

Where was the plot planning to blow up?

Parliament (Gunpowder underneath the House of Lords)

Was the gunpowder plot actually a government led conspiracy?





For hundred of years people believed the official government story. However in recent years many historians have found this story difficult to believe. It has been argued that Robert Cecil encouraged or started the plot. Cecil was a Protestant who wanted to make Catholics even more unpopular. So was it a government or Catholic **conspiracy**?

**Conspiracy – a secret plan to do something unlawful**



Robert Cecil, the king's chief adviser

**What was the official version of events?**

In 1603 James I came to the throne after his cousin's death (Elizabeth I). James passed a number of laws against Catholics.

A small group of Catholics decide they wanted James dead, hoping England would be better for them under a different monarch.

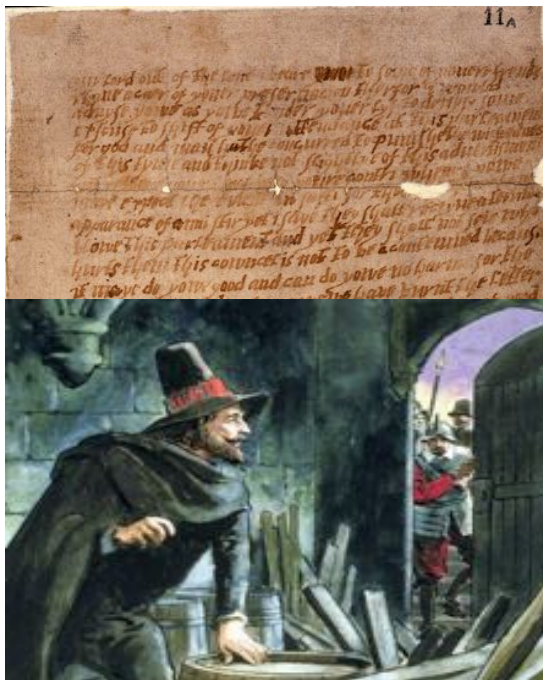
The group was made up of the devout Catholics, Robert Catesby as their leader, the Wright Brothers, Thomas Percy and Guido/Guy Fawkes.

## What was the official version of events?

The plotters planned that whilst James was opening parliament, which is done every year, they would detonate explosives killing James.

Once this had happened they planned to seize his daughter, Elizabeth, and place her on the throne under their influence.

**However, the plan soon fell apart.**



On 26<sup>th</sup> October 1605 a letter was received by Lord Monteagle warning him not to go to parliament as it would be too dangerous. Monteagle took the letter to the King's chief minister, Robert Cecil, who took it to the king.

Just after midnight on the 5<sup>th</sup> November the cellars of parliament were searched. Finding a man with a watch, matches and lighter in his pockets. He said his name was John Johnson, after 2 days of torture he gave his real name, another 2 he revealed the ploy and another 6 days he named his fellow plotters.

## What was the official version of events?



When the other plotters realised their plans had failed they fled to Holbeach House. There was a shoot out between the king's troops and the plotters, Catesby and Percy were killed the others were arrested for **treason**.

After a quick trial, the survivors including Guy Fawkes were sentenced to death. They were dragged through the stresses, hung until nearly dead, cut down, cut open, and their insides pulled out and burned in front of them. Their corpse were cut up and pieces were put in display around the county.



So, are we all happy with what 'happened' during the Gun Powder Plot?...



You will find a copy of this history mystery page next to this lesson link in the year 8 section of our website, and will need to decide whether or not you think the plotters were framed by the government to make Catholics look bad or whether it was a genuine plot...

We'll work through a few ideas together first...

## History Mystery

### 3.3 Were the Gunpowder Plotters framed?

## History Mystery

For hundreds of years, people believed the official government story of the Gunpowder Plot. This is the story that you read on pages 56-57. However, in recent years, some historians have found it difficult to accept this story. It has been argued that Robert Cecil, the king's minister and adviser, found out about the plot and even encouraged it. Cecil was a Protestant who wanted to make Catholics as unpopular as possible. What better way to do this than uncover a Catholic plot to kill the king?

**Objectives**

- Assess evidence related to the Gunpowder Plot.
- Justify whether you think Robert Cecil knew about the plot all along.

Look carefully through the following **evidence**. Your task is a history detective is to hunt for clues, piece them together, and try to establish a clear picture of the plot to kill King James.

**Evidence A**

The 36 barrels of gunpowder were kept in a cellar next to Parliament. The cellar was rented to Thomas Percy by John Whymond, a friend of Robert Cecil. Whymond died suddenly and unexpectedly on the morning of 5 November.

**Evidence B**

All supplies of gunpowder were kept under guard in the Tower of London. The records for 1604 are missing.


**Evidence C**

Lord Montagu took the mysterious warning letter to Robert Cecil on 26 October. The letters before Parliament weren't searched until at least a week later.

**Evidence D**

One of the plotters, Francis Tresham, was Montagu's brother-in-law. He was not caught straight away but was captured on 13 November. He died of a mysterious illness on 22 December, locked away in the Tower of London. Some said he'd been poisoned.

**INTERPRETATION A** From Look and Learn, a 1910s children's magazine. The magazine was designed to appeal to 9- to 14-year-olds and was packed with facts and colour stories that covered all sorts of topics, including history. This image was passed by Ron Embleton, one of the magazine's best-known artists. The title of the image is 'The truth about the Gunpowder Plot'.



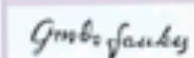
**Evidence E**

The source below is based on the views of a Catholic visitor to London in 1604. According to him, Robert Cecil said:

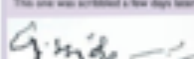
'The king is too kind to Catholics. This gives great offence to others. We cannot hope for good government while we have a large number of people who obey foreign rulers as Catholics do. The Catholic priests preach that Catholics must even kill the king to help their religion.'

**Evidence F**

The sources below show two examples of Guy Fawkes' signature while he was in the Tower of London. This one was written just after his arrest:



This one was scribbled a few days later:



Why do you think the signatures are so different?

**Evidence G**

The source below is part of Thomas Wintour's confession, read out at the trial. He was one of the main plotters. The original confession has never been seen. A copy was written out by Robert Cecil for the trial.

'We were working under a little story to the Parliament house. We under-proped it with wood. We bought the gunpowder and hid it in Mr Percy's house. We worked another two weeks against the stone wall, which was very hard to get through. At that time we called in Christopher Wright. About Easter we rented the cellar. After this Mr Fawkes laid into the cellar some sticks and two bundles of firewood.'

**Evidence H**

Holbeche House was surrounded on 7 November, only two days after Fawkes was captured. According to the government report, it took two days of torture to get Fawkes to reveal his real name, let alone his part in the plot (another two days) and the names of the plotters (a further six days).

**Over to You**

Now you have read all the evidence, it is time to put together your theory about the Gunpowder Plot.

**Step 1 Find evidence that the plotters were framed:** Can you find any evidence of a connection between the plot and Robert Cecil? Did Cecil try to hide anything? Perhaps he even tried to stop people from talking? Do you think he knew details of the plot before it happened? Make notes on what you have discovered.

**Step 2 Find a motive:** The king was not very popular at the time. Can you find any evidence to suggest why Cecil would 'set up' Catholic plotters and only catch them at the last minute? Write down your findings.

**Step 3 Think!** Can we trust the evidence? Is there any reason not to trust the confessions of the plotters who were caught? Are they reliable? If not, why not? Write down the ideas that you have.

**Step 4 Time to wake up your mind, history detective!** Were the plotters framed? Write a short paragraph outlining your theory. Was Cecil involved in setting up the plotters? Be sure to back up your ideas with some of the evidence.



## Evidence A

The 36 barrels of gunpowder were kept in a cellar next to Parliament. The cellar was rented to Thomas Percy by John Whynniard, a friend of Robert Cecil. Whynniard died suddenly and unexpectedly on the morning of 5 November.



You need to think really hard here. What happened on the 5<sup>th</sup> Nov.?

What is suspicious?

## Column 1

Sum up what the evidence says

*Cellar rented to Thomas by a friend of Cecil's. This friend died suddenly on the 5<sup>th</sup> NOV.*

## Column 2

How does this suggest that the plotters were framed?

Remember the two parts for your evidence – column 1 = summarise the evidence, what does it tell you, and column 2 = how does it suggest the plotters were framed?

### **Evidence B**

All supplies of gunpowder were kept under guard in the Tower of London. The records for 1604 are missing.

Why are they missing?

### **Evidence C**

Lord Monteagle took the mysterious warning letter to Robert Cecil on 26 October. The cellars below Parliament weren't searched until at least a week later.

Why did they wait a week?

## Evidence D

One of the plotters, Francis Tresham, was Monteagle's brother-in-law. He was not caught straight away but was captured on 12 November. He died of a mysterious illness on 22 December, locked away in the Tower of London. Some said he'd been poisoned.

Why might he have been poisoned?

Now over to you, looking at the remaining evidence, you need to come up with a really good conclusion...

The evidence suggests that the government arranged the plot because they wanted to catch Catholics trying to blow up Parliament. They may have wanted to do this because

.... (what did the government gain from the plot?)

There is evidence to suggest this is true because...

The evidence suggests that the gunpowder plot was led by Catholics without government involvement. The Catholics wanted to kill James because...

There is evidence to suggest this is true because ...