



# Guy Fawkes and the gunpowder plot

## Why do we learn about Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot?

In England, in 1605 during the reign of James I, an act of treason was planned.

At the last moment, the Gunpowder Plot fails, and now we commemorate the traitors - and in particular Guy Fawkes - every year with Bonfire Night!

## Who is Guy Fawkes?

Guy Fawkes (1570 to 1606), also known as Guido Fawkes, is one of a group of Catholic plotters who plans to blow up the Parliament - now known as the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

## What is the Gunpowder Plot?

At the time, King James I is on the throne. England had broken away from the Catholic faith and the Church of Rome in Henry VIII's reign (by 1536), but there are still many Catholics in the country. Guy Fawkes, with a group of thirteen Catholic plotters, plans to overthrow the King and put a Catholic monarch back on the throne.

The plotters put barrels of gunpowder in the cellars of the Parliament. They plan to set off the gunpowder during the opening of Parliament, on 5th November 1605. One or more of the plotters, however, are worried that some of their fellow Catholics and friends would be at the opening. A certain Lord Montecagle receives a letter warning him don't go to the Parliament because of the danger. Lord Montecagle shows the letter to the King, and the cellars are thoroughly searched and Guy Fawkes caught.

After several days of horrible torture, Guy Fawkes gives up the names of his plotters and all are found guilty and executed.

On 5th November 1605 Londoners are encouraged to celebrate the King's escape from assassination by lighting bonfires and an Act of Parliament declares 5th November as a holiday throughout the country.

## Modern Celebrations

When we celebrate Bonfire Night now, people come together to build a big bonfire and make an effigy - a model - of Guy Fawkes using old clothes stuffed with newspaper, to burn on the bonfire. People dance and sing around the bonfire and cook sausages and marshmallows. They eat toffee apples, too. Every year since on November 5th there has been celebrations with fireworks, gunpowder and bonfires, along with a reading in the British Parliament.

