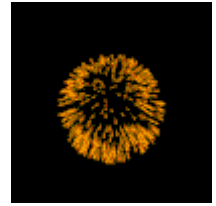


Bonfire Night 5th November



*"Remember, remember,
the fifth of November,
Gunpowder, treason and plot.
We see no reason why
Gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot!"*

Words to Guy Fawkes

The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 - A secret plan to overthrow the king.

Four hundred years ago, in 1605, a man called Guy Fawkes and a group of plotters attempted to blow up the Houses of Parliament in London with barrels of gunpowder placed in the basement. They wanted to kill King James and the king's leaders.



Why did Guy Fawkes want to kill King James 1st and the king's leaders?

When Queen Elizabeth 1st took the throne of England she made some laws against the Roman Catholics. Guy Fawkes was one of a small group of Catholics who felt that the government was treating Roman Catholics unfairly. They hoped that King James 1st would change the laws, but he didn't.

Catholics had to practise their religion in secret. There were even fines for people who didn't attend the Protestant church on Sunday or on holy days. James 1st passed more laws against the Catholics when he became king.

What happened - the Gunpowder Plot

A group of men led by Robert Catesby plotted to kill King James and blow up the Houses of Parliament, the place where the laws that governed England were made.



Guy Fawkes was one of a group of men

The plot was simple - the next time Parliament was opened by King James I, they would blow up everyone there with gunpowder. The men bought a house next door to the parliament building. The house had a cellar which went under the parliament building. They planned to put gunpowder under the house and blow up parliament and the king.

Guy Fawkes Discovered

Guy Fawkes was given the job to keep the barrels of gunpowder and to light the fuse. On the morning of 5th November, soldiers discovered Guy hidden in the cellar and arrested him. The trail of gunpowder at his feet would never be lit.



Guy Fawkes was taken to the Tower of London.

He was tortured and questioned about the other plotters. To start with, he didn't tell the soldiers anything about the plot. But, eventually he started to tell the truth.

A Celebration

In celebration of his survival, King James ordered that the people of England should have a great bonfire on the night on 5th November.



The event is still commemorated annually in England on 5th November by fireworks and burning 'guys' (effigies) on bonfires.

The searching of the cellars of Parliament before the opening of each new session, however, was not introduced until 1678.

