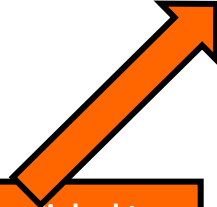


GUY FAWKES AND THE GUNPOWDER PLOT



The background of the Gunpowder Plot was linked to religion. Here is a summary of the key points that led to the plot being hatched.

Chronology (Time)

- 1 I can recall that a century is 100 years.
The Gunpowder Plot was discovered in **1605 /AD1605** and this was in the **17th century**.
- 2 I know that the **Vikings** existed between the **late 8th century (AD 793)** to the **early 11th century (AD1066)** and because the Gunpowder Plot was discovered in the **17th century (5th November 1605)** this is a rough **difference of approximately 6 centuries (600 years)**.
- 3 I know that **Guy Fawkes** lived in the period known as **The Stuart dynasty. (1603 – 1714)**
- 4 On **24th March 1603** James VI of Scotland was crowned **James I of England**. He took over from the **Tudor queen – Elizabeth I** when she died.



Queen Elizabeth I
(Last of the **Tudor** monarchs).
Reigned England 17 November 1558 until her death on 24 March 1603)



James I of England (1st Stuart dynasty monarch).
Reigned England 24 March 1603 until his death in 1625)

Had been King of Scotland
.His full name was James Charles **Stuart**



Charles I
James I's son
(Reigned 27 March 1625 until his execution in 1649).

His mum was Anne of **Denmark**

- 1 Guy Fawkes was one member of a gang of plotters who had decided to kill the king (James I). They all followed the Catholic religion. Their anger came from the bitter split between Catholic and Protestant Christians. This split happened many years before the plot's discovery on 5th November 1605.
- 2 For almost 100 years, Europe (including England and Scotland) had been torn apart by bitter religious arguments between different branches of the Christian church.
- 3 Some countries chose to follow new Protestant beliefs whilst others remained with the Catholic Church.
- 4 Both sides felt they were right and felt the other side were enemies of **TRUE** religion and must be defeated.
- 5 England had broken away from the Catholic Church in the 1530s when Henry VIII was king. However, many people in England stuck to their Catholic beliefs and were prepared to fight for what they believed in.
- 6 The Gunpowder Plotters had all suffered as Catholics under the long reign of Elizabeth I. She had tried to reach a compromise between Protestants and Catholics but the Pope declared that English Catholics could 'rise up' against her. As a result of this, new laws were passed:
 - Fines were increased for Catholics who refused to go to attend services at their local Protestant parish church;
 - Catholics who shielded/protected priests or tried to convert others to their religion faced prison or death.
- 7 This was the world in which young Catholics - such as Guy Fawkes – grew up in; they had to choose between loyalty to the crown (Queen Elizabeth I) or loyalty to their deepest religious beliefs.
- 8 There were lots of plots and rebellions against Elizabeth I. She even ordered her cousin – Mary Queen of Scots – to be executed due to letters linking her to a Catholic plot against her!
- 9 When Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, Catholics in England hoped things would get better for them. As she had no children to take over the crown, James VI of Scotland (whose mum was Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I's cousin) became King James I of England.
- 10 EXTRA: He had become King James VI of Protestant Scotland when he was 2 years old. His mum was a Catholic and his wife – Anne of Denmark – was also a Catholic so Catholics were hoping that their lives would improve.
- 11 Things looked good to start with: King James I stopped fining Catholics for not going to Protestant churches – they could worship in peace.
- 12 **HOWEVER** some people decided that they would only be *happy* when England was Catholic again.
- 13 Disaster struck when King James I found out about two plots against him in July 1603. It was then that he realised that life in England wasn't going to be easy.
- 14 Even though the plotters weren't **ALL** Catholics (in fact it was Catholic priests that had alerted the authorities, therefore doing a good deed for the king) **ALL** Catholics were unfairly put under suspicion.
- 15 Early in 1604, King James I announced his "utter detestation" of Catholics. Most Catholics accepted that they would have to continue their religion in secret. For some Catholics, the king's change in attitude was the last straw – they knew that they would have to act to get what they wanted and believed was right.
- 16 They decided that if the king wouldn't give them religious freedom, then they would come up with a plan to remove him from the monarchy so they could get their own way. And that's how the plot began.
- 17 The idea was to create a massive explosion underneath the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, London killing the king, his ministers and many family members too. The plotters planned to put one of James' surviving children on the throne and **FORCE** them to declare a Catholic England and so get their wish to be able to follow their religion openly and without fear.

BUT AS WE KNOW, THE PLOT DIDN'T GO TO PLAN...

There were 13 conspirators:

Robert Catesby	Guy Fawkes	Thomas Percy	Thomas Wintour	John Wright
Robert Keyes	Robert Wintour	Christopher Wright	Thomas Bates	
John Grant	Ambrose Rookwood	Francis Tresham	Everard Digby	

Vocabulary Checklist

Conspirator	Someone who takes part in a plot or conspiracy
Conspiracy	A secret plan by a group to do something harmful or unlawful.
Treason	Betraying or committing a crime against your country or government.
Traitor	Someone who betrays a person, country or government.
Government	A group of people with authority to rule.
Rebellion	An organised, armed resistance to a government or ruler
Monarch	King or queen.
Parliament	The body that made laws in England in the 1600s and now passes laws for the UK.
Catholic	Christian who is a member of the Roman Catholic Church, led by the Pope.
Protestant	Christian who is a member of any of the churches that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church from 1500 onwards.
Persecution	Attack on a particular person or group of people, especially for their race/beliefs.
Significant	Sufficiently great or important to be worthy of attention; noteworthy.
Primary source of information	These provide a first-hand account of an event or time period which are said to be true. Examples: diaries, interviews, eyewitness accounts, letters written at the time etc. Primary sources also include first-hand accounts which were documented later. Examples: autobiographies, memoirs and oral histories etc.
Secondary source of information	This is one that was created later by someone who DID NOT experience the event first-hand or participate in it. A secondary source provides second-hand information and
Anonymous	Not identified by a name.
Effigy	A model or sculpture of a person eg the guy on a bonfire – Guy Fawkes.

Bonfire Night and the Gunpowder plot are linked:

Bonfire Night is the celebration of the **FAILURE** of the Gunpowder Plot. King James I said that people must not forget the Gunpowder Plot and must thank God on 5th November every year because the plot failed; it's the anniversary of an attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Indeed, the Thanksgiving Act of 1606 made services and sermons commemorating the Gunpowder Plot a regular, annual feature each Nov 5th. Church attendance was compulsory that day back then. The tradition then grew to marking the day with the ringing of church bells and bonfires during the 1600s and 1700s. Indeed bonfires were lit in the streets of London on the day that the plot was discovered. Fireworks were included in some of the celebrations. In the 1800s traditional firework and bonfire parties became more common.

The disastrous plot plunged England's Catholics into crisis for 100s of years. New laws stopped them from voting in elections and practicing law. There were regular rumours of Catholic plots and they were blamed for many disasters, including the Great Fire of London! There were no more Catholic conspiracies in England following the Gunpowder Plot.

Guy Fawkes is a significant, historical figure and the Gunpowder Plot/Bonfire Night is a significant, historical event.

Did you know that even today, the events from that night result in the Houses of Parliament still being searched by the Yeomen of the Guard before the state opening to ensure that no 'modern day' Guy Fawkes is hiding in the cellars? However, this is more ceremonial than serious and they do check using lanterns. It's a tradition.



Robert Catesby was the ringleader and even when things got tough it was his strength and personality that persuaded the other that their plan could be successful.

Guy Fawkes was selected to be the one to hide in the cellar and light the 36 barrels of gunpowder as he knew all about explosives; he was a soldier.

With a few weeks to go, apparently an anonymous letter made its way to a leading Catholic man – Lord Monteagle – who was a friend of one of the conspirators warning him not to go to the opening of Parliament on November 5th.

He passed the letter on ... and King James I then read it, but decided to do nothing until the early hours of the morning on November 5th when Guy Fawkes was found with the gunpowder. Can you find out what happened next?

