

Gunpowder, Treason and Plot



History KS2

Gunpowder, Treason and Plot



Over 400 years ago, there was no such thing as Bonfire Night and no one held fireworks on the fifth of November.

The story began with Guy Fawkes and the other members of the Gunpowder Plot.



Gunpowder, Treason and Plot



In 1605, Britain was a Protestant country, ruled by King James I of England, who was also King James VI of Scotland. He did not allow Catholics to practise their religion and forced them to attend Protestant church services. Those who refused were fined (and were known as 'recusant Catholics').

This made the Catholics cross. By the time the 'Gunpowder Plotters' made their plan, King James had already escaped two attempts on his life by Catholics.



18th Century



Guy Fawkes was born in 1570 in York.

His father was Protestant but his mother's parents were 'recusant Catholics'. When his father died, his mother re-married a Catholic. Guy Fawkes grew up on the side of oppressed Catholics.

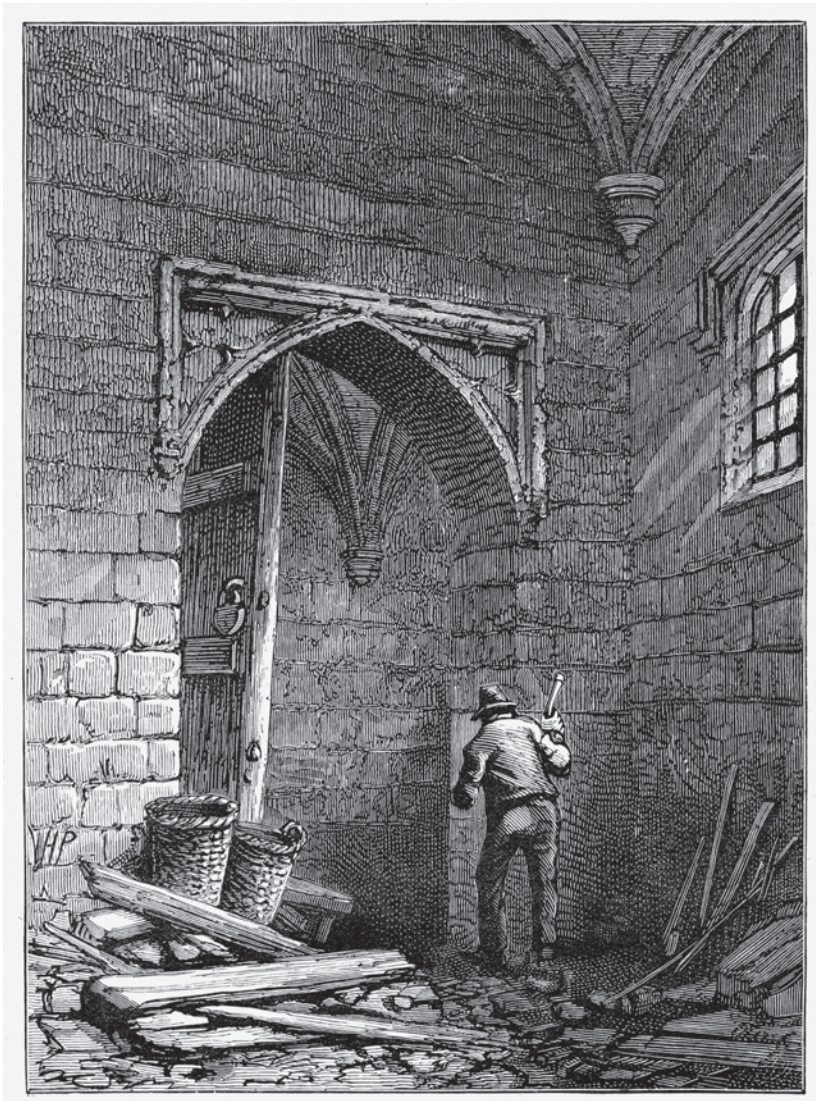
When he was 21, he went to Europe to fight for Catholic Spain against the Protestant Dutch Republic (in a war called the Eighty Years War).



Guy Fawkes met Thomas Wintour, who asked him to join the Gunpowder Plot. This was led by Robert Catesby.

The Plot was to blow up Parliament, kill King James and put his daughter, Elizabeth, on the throne. The explosion was planned for the opening of Parliament on the fifth of November.

Britain would become a Catholic kingdom once more.



The 'Gunpowder Plotters' rented a cellar under the House of Lords.

They spent eighteen months carefully building up their store of gunpowder and hiding it in the cellar.

On the fifth of November, Guy Fawkes' job was to set the gunpowder alight.





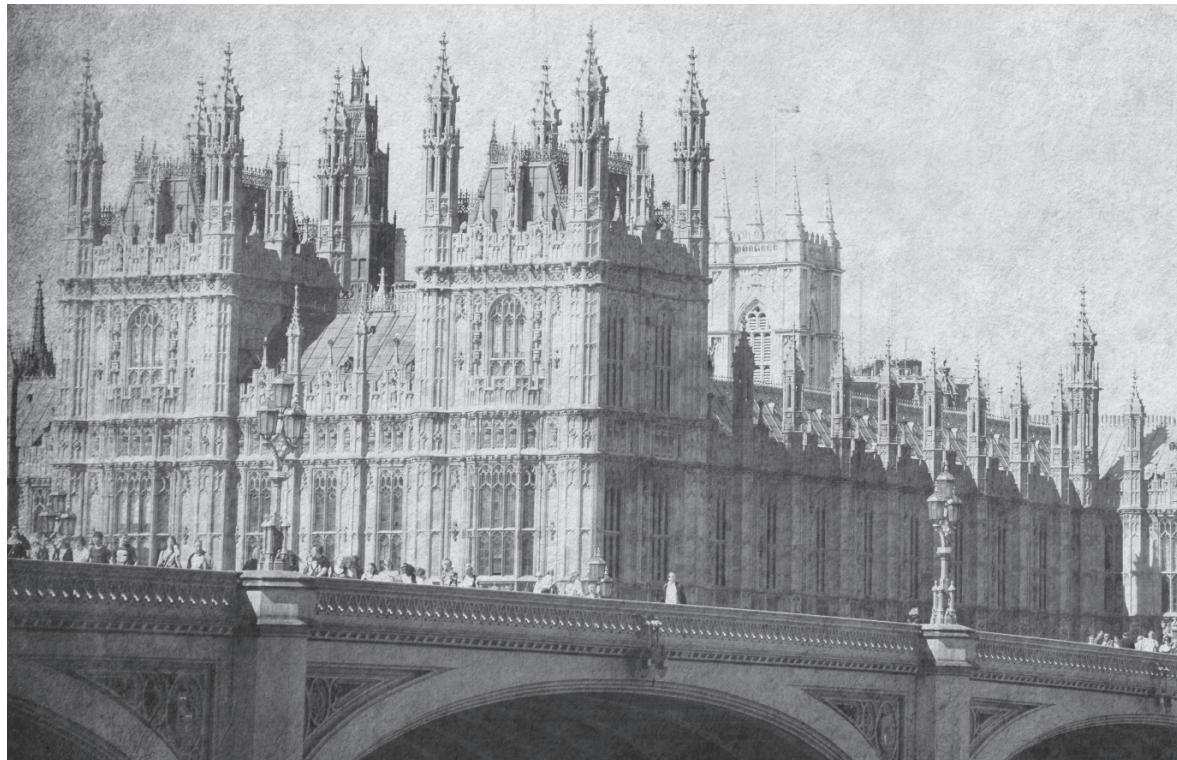
Lord Monteagle was the brother-in-law of one of the Plotters.

He received an anonymous letter, warning him not to attend the opening of Parliament.

Lord Monteagle showed the letter to Robert Cecil, the king's spymaster.



Robert Cecil ordered the king's men to search the Houses of Parliament from top to bottom.

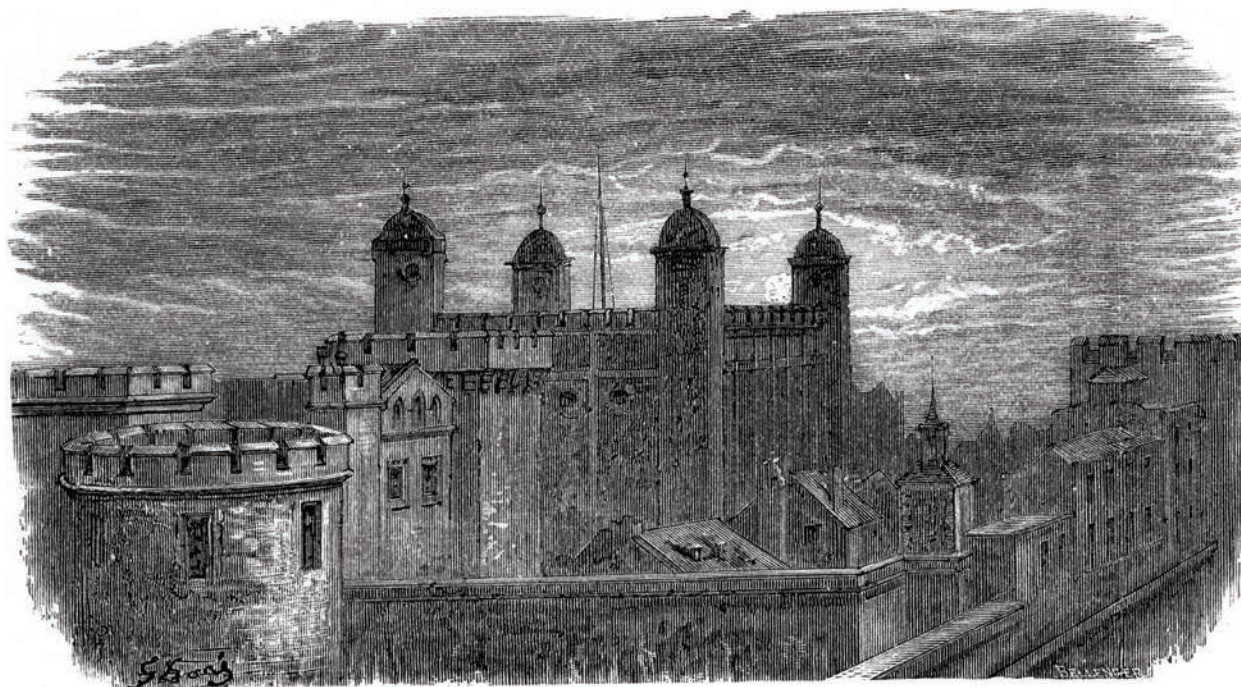




On the night of the fourth of November, Guy Fawkes left the cellar.

He was caught by Robert Cecil's men. They searched the cellar and discovered the barrels of gunpowder.

Guy Fawkes was arrested and taken to the Tower of London.



Guy Fawkes was tortured for two days before he finally confessed.

The plotters made a final stand in Staffordshire. Robert Catesby, their leader, was killed in a shoot-out with the king's men. The survivors were captured and taken to London to be tried.



The Gunpowder Plotters were sentenced to execution by being hanged, drawn and quartered.

At the end of January, 1606, they were taken to the gallows.

Before the noose was placed over his head, Guy Fawkes dived from the gallows and broke his neck. His dead body was hacked into pieces and his remains were sent to the 'four corners of the kingdom' as a warning.



Today, when we light up the sky with fireworks, we are remembering the explosion that never happened on the fifth of November 1605.

For over 400 years, gunpowder, treason and plot have never 'been forgot'.