

# The Gunpowder Plot



On 4<sup>th</sup> November 1605, a dangerous plot was stopped in its tracks. This plot was known as the Gunpowder Plot. A group of like-minded individuals planned to ignite over 30 barrels of gunpowder beneath the House of Lords. If the plot hadn't been stopped, many people would have been caught in the explosion, including the King of England.



## Plotting



In 1605, King James I was the ruler of England. For many years, Catholics had been poorly treated and were not allowed to worship freely. Many Catholics hoped that the new King would treat them more fairly. However, this was not the case and many people were unhappy.

It is thought that Robert Catesby met with a group of people in early 1605 and suggested a dangerous plot. He was worried that the Catholic faith was going to be wiped out and suggested a plan to get rid of the people that he believed were to blame.

## The Plot

On 5<sup>th</sup> November 1605, the House of Lords was due to host the State Opening of Parliament. This ceremony included the King and other important lawmakers.

The plan was for Guy Fawkes to ignite a large amount of gunpowder beneath the House of Lords on 5<sup>th</sup> November. Before the State Opening of Parliament, the group hired a vault that was directly beneath the House of Lords. By the beginning of November, it is thought that 36 barrels of gunpowder had been hidden underneath piles of coal and firewood in the vault.

On the evening of 4<sup>th</sup> November 1605, Guy Fawkes waited amongst the barrels of gunpowder for the perfect time to light the fuse and escape.

## The Letter

On 26<sup>th</sup> October 1605, Lord Monteagle received an **anonymous** letter. The letter told Lord Monteagle not to go to the House of Lords on 5<sup>th</sup> November. Immediately, Lord Monteagle took the letter to King James I, who ordered guards to investigate.

The guards discovered Guy Fawkes hiding amongst barrels of gunpowder. Inside his pocket, the guards found matches and a watch.

After being captured by the guards, Guy Fawkes was taken to the Tower of London. He was imprisoned for three days and eventually gave the names of others who had been involved in the plot. The **conspirators** were all found guilty of **treason** and were punished.

## Bonfire Night

After the Gunpowder Plot had been stopped, King James I said that 5<sup>th</sup> November each year would be a day of thanksgiving. He asked people to light bonfires to remember what could have happened. Over 400 years later, many people in Britain still choose to light bonfires and enjoy fireworks on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

## Glossary

**anonymous:** Someone who is not known.

**conspirators:** People who are involved in a secret plan.

**treason:** A crime of doing something that could endanger your country.



# Questions

1. According to the text, what was due to happen on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1605? Tick one.

- The King was going to visit Robert Catesby.  
 The House of Lords was going to host the State Opening of Parliament.  
 Guy Fawkes was going to meet with Robert Catesby.  
 Lord Monteaule was going to give a letter to the King.

2. Draw **four** lines and match each sub-heading with the summary of its contents.

<b>Plotting</b>	Information about how the Gunpowder plot is remembered today.
<b>The Plot</b>	Information about how the plot was uncovered.
<b>The Letter</b>	Information about the plan for the Gunpowder Plot.
<b>Bonfire Night</b>	Information about why the Gunpowder Plot was planned.

3. How many barrels of gunpowder were thought to have been hidden in the vault by the beginning of November?

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4. What **two** things were found in Guy Fawkes's pockets?

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- \_\_\_\_\_

5. **He was imprisoned for three days and eventually gave the names of others who had been involved in the plot.**

What does the word 'imprisoned' mean in this sentence?

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6. Using 25 words or fewer, summarise what you have learnt from the section titled **The Letter**.

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7. Explain how the layout of the text helps you to understand the information.

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8. Compare Robert Catesby and Guy Fawkes. How are they similar?

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