

Guy Fawkes



'Remember, remember the 5th of November ...' Every British child knows the rhyme about Guy Fawkes, who tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament in the Gunpowder Plot. But why did he do it? What went wrong? And how is it 'celebrated' today? Read on to find out more ...

On 5th November 1605, the guards of the Houses of Parliament searched the cellars of the government buildings after they had received a tip-off that someone was going to blow them up. They found Guy Fawkes, also known as Guido Fawkes, watching barrels of gunpowder. They arrested, tortured and got a confession out of him, and he was executed in January 1606.

Political history of the Gunpowder Plot

When the Tudor Queen Elizabeth II died in 1603, she had no children. The nearest relative was James IV of Scotland, who became James I of England in the same year. Elizabeth had been very tolerant of both Protestants and Catholics, after her father, Henry VIII, had persecuted Catholics and her sister, Mary, had persecuted Protestants. Everybody had hoped that James would be just as tolerant, but the first thing he did was to order all Catholic priests to leave England. A group of militant Catholics decided to join together to kill James.

One of this group was Guy Fawkes, who had been raised in York by his Protestant mother and Catholic stepfather. He joined 13 others to plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament when James I opened it on 5th November 1605.

Someone must have tipped off the guards, because they knew exactly where to find Guy along with dozens of barrels of gunpowder. He was arrested and tortured in the Tower of London until he confessed. He was accused of treason and sentenced to the punishment of being hung, drawn and quartered. On the day of his execution, he jumped from the scaffolding and died from a broken neck as he didn't want to face the kind of execution chosen for him.

The 5th November today

Today, children make up puppets of Guy Fawkes with old clothes and newspapers. They traditionally sit on the pavement with their guy, calling, "Penny for the guy" to get money for the night's celebration. The guys are then burnt on a bonfire on the night of the 5th November. Most schools have a bonfire and organise food and drinks as well as fireworks for their pupils and parents.

Children's rhyme

If you like to include the topic of Guy Fawkes into your lesson, ask your students to complete the traditional children's rhyme with the words given:

reason - forgot - remember - plot

Remember, _____, the 5th of November,
Gunpowder, treason and _____.
I see no _____, why gunpowder, treason
Should ever be _____.

(Key: *remember, plot, reason, forgot*)

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<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/Guy.html>

For **quizzes and games around Bonfire Night**, just click here:

<http://www.isabelperez.com/guyfawkes.htm>

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<http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/content/recipes/occasions/bonfire-night/>

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