

BONFIRE NIGHT

What's the story behind the pyrotechnics?

It's November 5th and the night is full of fire and explosions, but no problems. This is the annual British event called 'Bonfire Night'. So what's the story behind the pyrotechnics?

Well, we have to go back to the time of King James 1 in the 17th Century to **find out**. The main character to remember here is one Guy Fawkes - a member of a group of 13 English Catholics who **took part in** the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605. He is also sometimes known as "the last man to enter Parliament with honest intentions".

He was born in York, England, and as a soldier **fought on** the side of Catholic Spain against the Protestant Dutch Reformers. Because of his skill with explosives, he caught the eye of a man called Thomas Wintour who back in England introduced him to Robert Catesby, the leader of a group of influential Catholics.

Now, Catesby had a plan to **assassinate** King James I and restore a Catholic monarch to the throne of England. To **accomplish** this **dastardly** deed, the plotters bought the **lease** to an undercroft (a large cellar) beneath the House of Lords, and Fawkes was placed **in charge** of the 36 barrels of gunpowder they put there. The idea was that on the day the King opened Parliament, there would be a large boom and a sudden **vacancy** for a new Catholic monarch.

However, because of the receipt of an anonymous letter, perhaps sent by one of the plotters, the authorities searched Westminster Palace during the early hours of 5 November, and found Fawkes **guarding** the explosives. The king's supporters got hold of the letter and the plot was **rumbled!**

Over the next few days, he was questioned and tortured, and eventually he broke, naming the rest of the plotters. Some of these were killed; others caught and sentenced to death for **treason**.

At this time Britain used a particularly gruesome method of execution where prisoners were **hung, drawn and quartered** followed by having their heads removed and **spiked** somewhere with a nice view of London. Interestingly, Fawkes managed to escape this painful fate because he jumped from the scaffold where he was to be hung and broke his neck.

Therefore, Fawkes became the symbol of the Gunpowder Plot, the failure of which has been celebrated in England since 5 November 1606.

The tradition of marking the day with the ringing of church bells and bonfires started soon after the Plot's discovery, and fireworks were included in some of the earliest celebrations.

In Britain, the 5th of November is called Bonfire Night, or Guy Fawkes Night and his **effigy** is traditionally burned on a bonfire, usually accompanied by a firework display.

These lines from a nursery rhyme of the period have become famous;

**Remember, remember
The Fifth of November
The Gunpowder Treason and Plot,
I see no reason why Gunpowder Treason
Should ever be forgot.**

Reading Comprehension Quiz

Name: _____ 4°: _____

- I. The sentences below are either true or false according to the text. Tick [✓] the correct response and then justify it by giving the relevant brief of quotation from the text. Both the correct response and the correct quotation are required to gain the mark. (8 pts.)

- | | TRUE | FALSE |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) According to the text, Guy Fawkes was well known as the person with "good intentions".
<i>'the last man to enter Parliament with honest intentions'</i> | ☒ | ☐ |
| 2) Guy Fawkes involved in the Gunpowder Plot in favour of the Catholic Spain. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3) Robert Catesby introduced Thomas Wintour to Guy Fawkes. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4) The plotters did not want to kill the King James; they just wanted to make him get scared. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5) The plan the plotter had did not succeed. | ☐ | ☐ |

- II. Find the word in the right-hand column that could meaningfully replace one of the words on the left. (6 pts)

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Take part in | a) Discovered |
| 2. Accomplish | b) Succeed |
| 3. Dastardly | c) Cruel |
| 4. Lease | d) Disagreement |
| 5. Rumbled | e) Betrayal |
| 6. Treason | f) Involve in |
| | g) Contract |

- III. Complete the following gaps indicating to whom or to what the word/s underlined refer/s. (2 pts)

Refer/s to:

- a) ... Thomas Wintour who back in England introduced him to Robert (Paragraph) _____
- b) ... and quartered followed by having their heads removed and ... (Paragraph) _____

- IV. Write a 35-45 word explanation about Bonfire night's origin (04 pts)

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