

Autumn Term 2 Year 1 History Overview

Key facts

The Gunpowder Plot was one of the most famous attempts to kill a king in British history. A group of men, including one named Guy Fawkes, planned to blow up the Houses of Parliament. They were caught before they could carry out the plot. Every year on the anniversary of the plot, people in the United Kingdom celebrate the fact that the plot failed. The celebrations include bonfires and fireworks.

The men who planned the Gunpowder Plot were Roman Catholics who were unhappy with the way they were being treated.

James I came to the throne in 1603 and he succeeded Elizabeth I, a Protestant, who did not allow Catholics to practice their religion. Roman Catholics in England expected James to treat them well because his mother was a Catholic, but he didn't. The men were so angry they plotted to kill the king and every member of the government during the state opening of Parliament on November 5, 1605. The leader of the group was a man called Robert Catesby. The group rented out a cellar beneath the Houses of Parliament and hid 36 barrels of gunpowder to blow it up.

The night before the opening of Parliament, soldiers caught Guy Fawkes in the cellar. They arrested him and took him to the Tower of London. After three days of torture, Fawkes told his captors the names of his fellow plotters. They were all arrested for treason—plotting against the king and the country—and were imprisoned in the Tower.

The Gunpowder Plot 1605

Brief summary/ overview

The Gunpowder Plot was a failed attempt to blow up England's King James I (1566-1625) and the Parliament on November 5, 1605. The plot was organised by Robert Catesby (c.1572-1605) in an effort to end the persecution of Roman Catholics by the English government. Catesby and others hoped to replace the country's Protestant government with Catholic leadership.

Around midnight on November 4, 1605, one of the conspirators, Guy Fawkes (1570-1606), was discovered in the cellar of the Parliament building with barrels of gunpowder. Fawkes and other men involved in the plot were tried and executed for treason. Every November 5, the British celebrate Guy Fawkes Day by burning Fawkes in effigy.

Prior Knowledge

The children have had the experience of learning about an important historical figure through our study of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. They have a basic understanding of timelines and that history is the study of real people and events that have already happened.

Key Vocabulary

Guy Fawkes, Robert Catesby, Charles I, plotters, Gunpowder, consequence, Parliament, fuse, protest, Catholic, Protestant, government, conspiracy, London, capital city, punishment, disaster, explosion, arrest.

Resources

On line clips and images
Non-fiction texts
Magic Grandad – Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot

Cross curricular links/visits

Art - Bonfire night and the creation of wax resist pictures.