

The Gunpowder Plot

The Plan

The plan was to blow up King James I of England, Members of Parliament and many of the important people that ran the country at that time.

Why?

In 1604, England was ruled by King James I. He was a Protestant but his mother had been a Catholic. For many years, Catholics had been badly treated by the monarchy so when a king whose mother had been Catholic was crowned, they hoped he would be a little kinder towards Catholics.

The Problem with King James I

King James I mistreated Catholics. He took land away from them, he made Catholic priests leave the country and fined people if they did not go to Church of England services.

English People

Some English Catholics merely pretended not to be Catholic to ensure their safety. Others were very angry and wanted something done about the unfair king.

The Plotters

In 1604, a man called Robert Catesby met with his cousin, Thomas Wintour, and his friend, John Wright. Catesby told them of his idea of blowing up the Houses of Parliament and killing the king. The gang gathered together twelve other allies during the planning of the act.



Guy Fawkes

Guy Fawkes was fighting for the Spanish and was an explosives expert. He was a Catholic, who also hated King James I.

Arrangements

Thomas Percy, who was one of the plotters, rented a vault under the Houses of Parliament. Guy Fawkes stored the barrels of gunpowder in the vault.

The Anonymous Letter

On 5th November 1605, Lord Monteagle was due to attend the opening of Parliament. He received an anonymous letter that warned him not to go to the ceremony.

The Plot Uncovered

The king was shown the letter and he immediately ordered an investigation. The House of Lords was searched and there in the vault was Guy Fawkes with 36 barrels of gunpowder, matches and fuses. Guy Fawkes was arrested.

The End of the Plot

Most of the other plotters escaped to the Midlands. Catesby, Percy and the Wright brothers were killed in a gunfight. The rest were wounded, captured and taken to the Tower of London. They were later executed. Guy Fawkes was tortured for two days then executed for treason against the king.

