

Key stage 2 exercise 3

Pupil C – Piece C: a biography

Context: the class looked at the features of a biography. Pupils used computers to find information about Guy Fawkes and wrote their own biography of him.

Guy Fawkes



We all know that this man is infamous for planning and staging the well-known and notorious Gunpowder Plot, but what else do you actually know? Here are some facts...

Early Life

Guy Fawkes, also known as Guido Fawkes, was born on 13th April 1570 to Edith Fawkes (née Jackson) and Edward Fawkes in York. Tragically, his father died when young Guy was only eight years old. After his father's death, Edith remarried a Catholic man - this was a pivotal moment in Guy's life because the family were strictly Catholic from then on. Historians still have many unanswered questions about this to-be plotters' early life - such as what the name of Guy's new father was - because there would have been limited sources back then.

The Gunpowder Plot

In 1603, a new king ascended to the throne, and he heralded a new era of royalty. This was King James I. As he was a strong Protestant and stood firm to his religion, he absolutely loathed Catholics and persecuted anybody who did not go along with his beliefs. Many rebellions took place, but all of them failed. Guy was friends with twelve other Catholics - these included Robert Catesby, John Wright, Thomas Percy and Thomas Wintour. They desperately wanted freedom so that they could speak their mind and go to churches which supported their religion. They decided to form a plot to kill the King and all of the Protestants with 30 barrels of a highly explosive, defensive material - gunpowder. Soon enough, the plan began to take shape and become reality. They had hired out a cellar underneath the



House of Lords and shipped 34 barrels of gunpowder into it. Guy Fawkes chose to be the one to light the fuse on November 5th, the day of the State Opening of Parliament...

On that fateful day, Guy himself was in that cellar with a match and also some slow-burning touchwood so he had time to escape. Little did he know that an unsigned letter had been sent to Lord Monteaule telling him not to come to Parliament that day. He said that the building 'shall receive a terrible blow yet no-one shall see who hurts them'. Of course, being a faithful Protestant, Monteaule went straight to the King and told him everything. The King ordered his officers to search every cellar nearby - and they found Guy Fawkes...

Punishment and Death

Guy Fawkes was immediately captured and immobilized and taken straight to the King James, who formally arrested him. In the Tower of London, he was taken through Traitor's Gate and tortured. At first, Guy was implicit about his plot, the accomplices and even his personal details, claiming that his name was John Johnson until the end of his second day of punishment. After a few days, he confessed and was therefore sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered. However, Guy Fawkes jumped from the noose and broke his neck to die. We now place effigies of him on bonfires to commemorate and celebrate Guy, and how we saved the King...

Interesting Facts!

- The letter to Monteaule is thought to have been sent by his brother Francis
- The King was James I of England and James VI of Scotland.