

## Bonfire Night, Fireworks Night, Guy Fawkes Night

In the UK, on the fifth of November, we celebrate a special holiday that no one else celebrates.

It's called Bonfire Night! But it also has other names too - Fireworks Night and Guy Fawkes Night.

In the evening everybody goes to a party outside. There are lots of parties - in parks and in peoples houses. Some people go to big parties with hundreds of people. Some go to small parties with a few friends. All the parties are outside, after dark. We have a big bonfire - as big as we can build. And we set off fireworks.

Sometimes we eat special food - like toffee apples or food that we cook in the fire, like baked potatoes and toasted marshmallows.

Sometimes people make a Guy - a pretend person (like a scarecrow) - that they put on the fire and burn. But not many people do this any more.

The reason for this celebration is that a long time ago, in 1605, a group of men who were Catholics tried to kill the King who was a Protestant. They hid 36 barrels of gunpowder (explosives) under the Houses of Parliament (where the British government is) to destroy it. But they were discovered and captured and killed.

The king made it a holiday because he had been saved and we still celebrate today.

We sometimes sing a rhyme which tells the story:

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



Toffee Apples



The Houses of Parliament

## More Historical Information

The Gunpowder plot was a Catholic plot to overthrow the Protestant King between lots of people but today we only remember the Guy Fawkes, the man who prepared the explosives. He was not the leader of the plot, but was a soldier who had fought in Spain against the French. They put 36 barrels of gunpowder in a cellar under the houses of parliament.

If it was successful the explosive would have been so powerful it could have destroy everything for 500 meters around.

They were going to blow up the explosives on the first day of Parliament, a ceremony each year which starts the political year and at which many very important people attend. They hoped to start a revolution so that they could make a Catholic Queen.

Guy Fawkes was left in charge of the explosives, but the conspiracy was given away and at midnight on 5th November he was found in cellars under parliament near the gunpowder and with matches to set light to it. He confessed that he was trying to destroy the king.

They tortured him and he revealed the other men involved, all of whom were caught and tried, found guilty and sentenced to death. Guy Fawkes and several others were executed on 32st of January in London by being hung, drawn and quartered. A particularly gruesome form of death.

They were pulled through the streets behind a horse before being hung by the neck until almost dead. They were then disembowelled - and their intestines were burnt in front of them while they were still alive. Finally their head was cut off and they were divided into four pieces.

## Questions

When is Bonfire Night?

What do people eat at a Bonfire party?

What do people do at the parties?

What is a Guy?

What is a Bonfire?

What did the Catholics do in 1605?

What happened when they were discovered?

## Key Vocabulary

Guy

Bonfire

Fireworks

Explosives

## Sources and More information

<http://www.parliament.uk/gunpowderplot/>

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil\\_war\\_revolution/gunpowder\\_robinson\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/gunpowder_robinson_01.shtml)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunpowder\\_Plot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunpowder_Plot)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy\\_Fawkes\\_Night](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_Fawkes_Night)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanged,\\_drawn\\_and\\_quartered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanged,_drawn_and_quartered)

## Photos

**Bonfire** - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/stevewilde/1413761/>  
by **Steve Wilde**: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/stevewilde/>

**Ta-Da! - Toffee Apples!** - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/clav/289632124/>  
by **Clav**: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/clav/>

**Houses of Parliament and Big Ben** - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/philprice/3002231214/>  
by **Mr Phil Price** - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/philprice/>