

# GODs Guy Fawkes

Over 60 plus people enjoyed the talk by Paul Harding, the History Man, about the Gunpowder plot and how it related to Worcester, which culminated in the arrest of Guy (or Guido) Fawkes On 5th November 1605.

Paul explained that many books and tv series actually get the facts very wrong, factually. For example, Guido Fawkes was born a Protestant and his mother married into a catholic family. He was, in fact, a mercenary who would work for whoever paid him.



Robert Catesby was the lead of the Plot and his family always had issues with the Royal Family. A News Sheet from 1606 described the executions and goes into great details about the plot.

Worcestershire was a well-known catholic supporting county, and many people were involved in the plot and suffered the same fate as the main protagonists. Sets of playing cards were sold describing the plot.



Some people believe that the roots of the plot go back to Henry VIII and his dissolution of the Monasteries when the issues with the Protestants and Catholics came to a head after Henry made himself head of the Church of England and banned Catholic worship. King James 1 was not a very liked man, he was not a strong king, or a warrior king and he had health problems. At the start of his reign, he was happy with the Catholics doing their own thing and then he started to put laws in against the Catholics. Robert Cecil was the King's main man against the Catholics.

The only church services allowed were those by the Church of England and Catholics were fined or imprisoned if they did not attend the Church of England services. Some wealthy catholic families built their own chapels or hidden rooms within their house that they could use to worship. Latin was banned in all services.

Robert Cecil told local militia to watch catholic homes for visiting priests. The Catholics become very clever in hiding the elements of the altar and icons that they used in case the soldiers approached. Some of the main



catholic homes in Worcestershire were Hagley Hall, Hindlip Hall, Paddington Court and Harrington Hall. Harrington has the most Priest's Holes in a home in the country, built by Nicolas Owen, the most famous builder of them.

Catesby was the leader of the plot and by the autumn of 1604 there were 13 main plotters, and they were regularly meeting in various places, mainly in London but in other places as well, including Worcestershire. They tried writing to the King expressing their concerns, but they had no replies, so the plot was hatched to kill the King and attack Parliament at the State Opening in 1605 was selected as the time for the attack.

The plan also included a large rebellion to be started in the Midlands with the aim of kidnapping Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James 1st, and put her on the throne as a puppet Queen following the death of the King. They started stockpiling weapons and horses for the rebellion, stealing many horses from Warwick Castle. Catesby decided that they would blow up the King in Parliament as the best way of killing him as most pistols and muskets of the day were so large that they could not hide them to get close enough to shoot the King. The weapons were so inaccurate that you had to be very close to be sure of a kill, Paul suggested that most people killed in battle were not the ones aimed at but in the vicinity of the person being aimed at.

The plotters knew of a John Johnson, who was a war veteran and a explosives expert. He was known to them as Guido Fawkes, but some documents refer to Johnson. He decided that they needed 36 barrels of gunpowder, which they managed to secretly order from the makers. The first lot of gunpowder got wet where it was stored, and somehow, they managed to obtain another 36 barrels. Some historians now believe that Cecil and the King knew about the plot. From the way the plotters were able to get both lots of the gunpowder so easily and also, they were going to tunnel under the road into Parliament but then suddenly the cellars under Parliament became available to rent when they found that they could not tunnel under the road into Parliament due to the poor condition of the soil.

Lord Montego received a letter from one of his relatives, who was one of the plotters who wrote to him to say there would be a 'terrible blow at the opening of Parliament'. He was told to burn the letter, but he gave it to Cecil. On the 4th the Yeoman Warders searched Parliament but found nothing untoward. Guido Fawkes was in the cellars on the day ready to set the fuse. Modern experts believe that 36 barrels would have taken out a large area of London, so he was an earlier suicide bomber. For some reason the King ordered a second search, another clue to the fact he knew what was going on and this found Guido Fawkes and the gunpowder. The information distributed afterwards showed that the King saved Parliament, and this helped to make him a more likable King.



In the Midlands everyone was waiting for news that the King was dead, but they realised it had failed. Many of the plotters fled to Holbeche House in Staffordshire. The Sheriff of Worcester, Sir Richard Walsh, was ordered to find them and on the 8th of November found them at Holbeche House with 200 militia and following a battle they were either arrested or killed.

Guido Fawkes was terribly tortured in the Tower but did not reveal any information, until he knew that it was over and then he confessed, revealing the full plot and named the plotters. The scrawl of his signature gives some idea of the pain he went through. The plotters were all hung, drawn and quartered. Many people, either involved or thought to be involved



small fair browned boy. *Younger* Sub Charles  
 by long frame have over this person very tall hand can  
 to fast on the right; but the left side of hand no marks  
 can be recognizable as (the Sub being kept under London  
 upon our job not found money, and refused to leave  
 & turned away by Lady Elizabeth.

The names of other universall posted upon some walls  
 within opportunity to the Lord's residence.

Edward Digby, *Esq* Guido Joubert  
 Ambrose Richman  
 Francis Trishan.

John Grant  
 Robert ~~W~~ Winter

East  
 F. du Roch  
 W. Wad

