

TEXT 1-

Guy Fawkes was born in 1570 and though his father was a staunch Protestant, his mother married for a second time into a strongly Catholic family. He went to St Peter's School at York - like the Wright brothers - and later became a soldier, fighting for the Spanish against the Dutch. Although not a senior officer, he gained a reputation for his technical expertise and on behalf of some of the English Catholics he discussed with the Spanish an invasion of England.

Fawkes had grown into a good looking man, tall and strong, with thick reddish-brown hair and beard, and an impressive moustache. His compatriots in Europe described him admiringly as: 'A man of great piety, of exemplary temperance, of mild and chearful demeanour, an enemy of broils and disputes, a faithful friend, and remarkable for his punctual attendance upon religious observance.'

In 1604 he was recruited by Thomas Winter to join the Gunpowder conspiracy and came to London. Catesby initiated him and Thomas Percy into his plans in May. Once Percy had rented the house next to the House of Lords later that month, it was decided that Fawkes would pretend to be Percy's servant, and live there. He adopted the false identity of John Johnson, and was closely involved in the business of digging a tunnel under the House of Lords and procuring gunpowder. Once the House of Lords basement was rented, the tunnel was abandoned. Fawkes went abroad during the middle of 1605, but was back in London in late October to finalise the plan, and was ready on 4 November to carry it out.

When the basement was searched later that day Fawkes was found looking after a large pile of firewood. His explanations were initially accepted. But suspicions were subsequently aroused and, in a second search later that evening, the gunpowder was found under the wood and Fawkes was arrested.

Guy Fawkes was interrogated several times, but - to the admiration of members of the government, including the King - admitted almost nothing. The King authorised the use of torture on 6 November and Fawkes's testimonies of 7, 8 and 9 November revealed much more information which the authorities used to begin to pick up some of the other conspirators. Fawkes was tried with the other surviving conspirators on 27 January 1606 and executed in Old Palace Yard, Westminster, on 31 January.

TEXTE 2:

Everyone knows how Fawkes was caught in the act, imprisoned and tortured at the Tower of London and that he and most of his fellow conspirators suffered a traitor's hideous death in Westminster.

Guy Fawkes was born in York in 1570, the son of Edward, a church lawyer and prominent Protestant in the city, and Edith, whose family included secret Catholics. To all outward appearances, the Fawkes were a law-abiding Protestant family, until Edward Fawkes died when Guy was 8 years old. His mother remarried, this time to a Catholic, Dionysius Bainbridge. The young Guy was drawn strongly to his stepfather's religion, and although he knew of the dangers, he converted to Catholicism. At the age of 21, the passionate young man set off to Europe to fight for Catholic Spain against Protestant Dutch reformers in the Eight Years War.

Guy Fawkes's future took a fateful turn when he met Englishman Thomas Wintour in Spain. Wintour was scouting around for allies to join a group of Catholic conspirators based in England, led by his cousin Robert Catesby. Devout Fawkes was a perfect match, brave and skilful. The two men returned to England in 1604, where James I had acceded to the throne the previous year. With the new reign, Catholics across the country had hoped for the end of the religious persecution they suffered for so long. After all, the King's mother - Mary, Queen of Scots - had been a devout Catholic. However they were soon disappointed; the Protestant James I wasn't a tolerant king. The conspirators, with Guy Fawkes now among them, decided on a drastic measure. Catesby's plan was to blow up Parliament during its State Opening on 5 November, when James I, the Queen and his heir would also be present, and would be killed.

The conspirators then hoped to crown the King's young daughter, Princess Elizabeth. The plan very nearly succeeded. It was only thanks to an anonymous letter to the authorities, received in late October, that the King, his family and his Protestant ministers were not all murdered. Royal guards searched The House of Lords at midnight and in the early hours of 5 November Fawkes was discovered in the cellars, with a fuse, a small lamp, a box of matches and 36 poorly-hidden barrels of gunpowder.

Fawkes was arrested and taken to the King. When asked what he was doing in the cellars, Fawkes replied boldly: 'I wish to blow the Scottish King and all of his Scottish Lords back to Scotland.' He also expressed his regret at having failed. Although insulted, James I couldn't help but praise the traitor's 'Roman resolution'.

Fawkes was brought to the Tower of London to be imprisoned and interrogated. Sir William Waad, Lieutenant of the Tower, led much of the interrogation in the Great Hall of the Queen's House, a 16th-century timber-framed building that overlooks Tower Green. At the time, the monarch or Privy Council had to authorise any form of torture. James I himself wrote the royal warrant: 'If he will not otherwise confesse, the gentler tortures are first to be used upon him, and then step by step you may employ the harsher, and so speede youre goode work.'

Fawkes, who was already the most famous of all the plotters, was the last to go up the gallows. According to a contemporary account: 'Last of all came the great devil of all, Guy Fawkes, alias Johnson, who should have put fire to the powder. His body being weak with the torture and sickness he was scarce able to go up the ladder, yet with much ado, by the help of the hangman, went high enough to break his neck by the fall.' He made no speech, but with his crosses and idle ceremonies made his end upon the gallows and the block, to the great joy of all the beholders that the land was ended of so wicked a villainy.'