



Guy Fawkes

On the trail of the Gunpowder Plotters

www.guy-fawkes.org.uk



The Gunpowder Plot conspirators - those highlighted went to St Peter's School.



York in the time of Guy Fawkes

A time of turmoil, suspicion, persecution and tragedy.

- 1530's** Severe breakdown in relations between Henry VIII and the Pope in Rome. The King replaces the Pope with himself as the head of the Church of England. Anyone who remains loyal to the Pope (recusant catholic) is now an outlaw and a traitor.
- 1536 - 1540** Henry VIII begins closing Monasteries. In York many churches, shrines and the magnificent St Mary's Abbey are closed and stripped. Catholic risings in York and across the North of England are ruthlessly suppressed.
- 1553** The new Queen Mary restores Catholicism and begins persecuting Protestants, killing 400 to become known as 'Bloody Mary'.
- 1558** Queen Elizabeth resumes the persecution of Catholics, passing laws to weed out 'recusants' (Catholics who refuse to convert to the Protestant faith).
- 1572 - 1592** As Guy Fawkes grows up in York, many Catholics die in the city's crowded prisons and 41 are executed including Margaret Clitherow, who is "pressed to death".
- 1603** James VI of Scotland becomes King James I of England. He continues to punish Catholics, disappointing those who hoped for better times.
- 1604 - 1605** A plot is hatched to kill James and replace him with a Catholic King.
- 1605** On the 5th of November the plot is foiled when Guy Fawkes is caught red-handed with a stash of gunpowder underneath the Houses of Parliament. King James decrees that henceforth, November 5th will be an annual day of celebration... 400 years later we are still obeying that decree every time we "burn a Guy" on bonfire night.

Remember Remember the Fifth of November:

On November 5th 1605, the day of the State Opening of Parliament, Guy Fawkes of York was discovered preparing to light a fuse on 36 barrels of gunpowder, which had been hidden under The Houses of Parliament in London. Had he succeeded in his mission to blow up Parliament he would have wiped out the entire Royal Family, the Lords and the Commons.

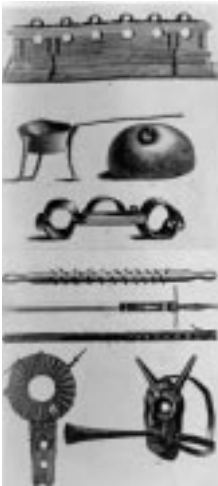
But who was Guy Fawkes and how did he get involved in such a grotesque act of treason and murder? This walking trail will help you explore the events of the time and the city that Guy Fawkes and some of his fellow conspirators grew up in.

Guy Fawkes of York

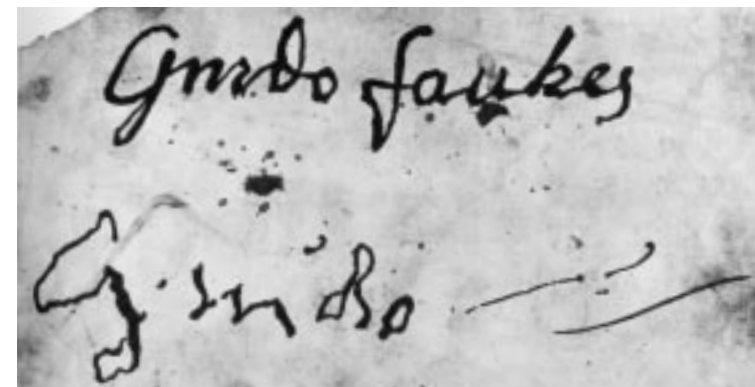
Guido Fawkes was born a protestant in York in 1570. His father died when he was nine and his mother remarried into a family of "recusants" (catholics in secret). In 1582 Guy attended St Peter's School along with several other Gunpowder Plotters. He inherited some land outside the city and in 1593, on his 21st birthday, he sold the land and used the money to leave home and enlist in the Spanish army, fighting for Catholics against Protestants in the religious wars raging across Europe. He became an expert in explosives and was described by his peers as brave and powerful. In 1601, in Madrid, Guy met up with Thomas Winter and his old schoolfellow from St Peters in York, Christopher Wright. Through them he was enrolled into a plot to kill the King. He was a useful expert. More importantly, he was unknown to the authorities in England.

Gunpowder, Treason and Plot

The coronation of King James I brought great hope to those who had suffered for so long under Elizabeth I. His wife was Catholic after all. When their hopes were brutally dashed, disappointment quickly turned to bitter conspiracy among some English Catholics, many from York and the surrounding area. For a year the plotters tried to tunnel under the Houses of Parliament. Eventually Thomas Percy hired the cellar in which the gunpowder barrels were hidden. It was Guy Fawkes who was to remain in the cellar and light the fuse when the time came. While Guy was tortured, his fellow conspirators were hunted down. Guy Fawkes was the last to die. Finally, he was, hung, drawn and quartered and his body parts were sent to the 4 corners of the Kingdom as a warning.



Torture instruments used on Guy Fawkes



Guy Fawkes signature on two confession statements – before and after torture!

The start of the walk is at King's Manor



The Lion and the Unicorn fighting for the Crown

1. Kings Manor

This was originally the house of the Abbot of St Mary's Abbey. After the Abbey was closed down by Henry VIII it housed the Council of the North, which among other things was charged with weeding out Catholics and secret "popish" priests. In 1541 Henry himself stayed here, this inspired its new name, The King's Manor. James VI Scotland visited on his way South to become James I England in 1603. You can see his initials by the front door, at the foot of each column. James I was Protestant but his wife was Catholic. His coronation brought hope of improved tolerance towards Catholics. His visit here only added insult to injury when those hopes were dashed! The shield above the entrance is a symbol of unity but what followed was almost 90 years of intermittent war underpinned by the Catholic v Protestant struggle. That struggle was remembered in folk memory by the rhyme "the lion and the unicorn were fighting for the crown; The lion beat the unicorn all about the town"!



A reconstruction of how St Mary's Abbey may have looked

2. The Museum Gardens / St Mary's Abbey

Inside the Museum Gardens stands the ruins of St Mary's Abbey, which for over 400 years was the wealthiest and most powerful abbey in the North of England and rivalled York Minster in splendour. In 1539 the Abbey was shut down by King Henry VIII. Like all other abbeys, priories and friaries its buildings were sold off and stripped to fund Henry's war with Catholic France. Anger at the closure of the first convent led to "The pilgrimage of Grace" in October 1536, when 35,000 rebel pilgrims entered York demanding a return to the rule of the Pope and an elected parliament in York. Tricked in to standing down by Henry VIII, the leader Robert Aske was executed. His body hung in chains for a month from Cliffords Tower as a warning to Northern Catholics. When Guy Fawkes was growing up in York the once sacred Abbey had become a quarry for stone. From the Museum Gardens follow the City Walls to Micklegate Bar.



Micklegate Bar & Guy Fawkes' head on a stake

3. Micklegate Bar

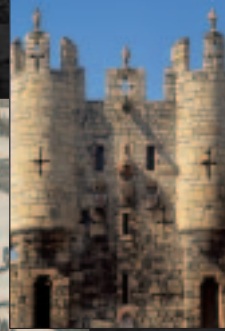
Micklegate Bar is the royal entrance to York. Throughout medieval times it was the scene of grand civic events including, during Guy Fawkes' time, the greeting of King James I to the City. Micklegate Bar was also home to the severed heads of traitors and rebels, which were skewered on pikes and displayed above the gate, there to be picked clean by magpies and crows. One of the heads displayed here was that of Thomas Percy, the 7th Earl of Northumbria and leader of the Catholic rebellion of 1569 which was brutally put down by an army raised in York. The Earl's head stood here, along with the heads of other leaders, for two years before it was secretly removed by his followers. In 1605 another member of the same Percy family was executed for conspiring, with Guy Fawkes, to blow up Parliament.



The hidden catholic chapel in the Bar Convent

4. Bar Convent

In the 1530s Henry VIII had put an end to all monasteries and convents in England. Over the following centuries, however, Catholic priests and nuns risked their lives to practice their religion in secret. The Bar Convent was founded on November 5th 1686 when it was still illegal to be a Catholic. In the beginning the convent was a secret community, known as "The Ladies of the Bar". The secret community was started by Mary Ward, a relation of the Wright brothers, Guy's Fawkes schoolfellows from St Peter's and partners in the Gunpowder Plot. Inside the convent there is an exhibition about religious struggles in the North of England. Hidden in the centre of the convent you can visit a secret chapel. Eight exits provide escape routes from the chapel in the event of a raid and a priest's hiding hole is concealed in the floor for further safety.



Ouse Bridge in the times of Guy Fawkes

5. Ouse Bridge

In the time of Guy Fawkes Ouse Bridge was crowded with buildings, one of which was the dreaded Kidcotes Prison, overcrowded with Recusants (Catholics who recognised the authority of the Pope). In 1572 an act of parliament ordered all Catholic priests to leave the country and declared that anyone associating with them was guilty of treason, punishable by death and loss of all possessions. It was here that Margaret Clitherow awaited trial for harbouring priests. On being found guilty she was taken up to the tollbooth on Ouse bridge, stripped and 'pressed to death' under her own front door. After the gunpowder plot, the situation for Catholics in York got worse. They were held under strict surveillance. More than 50 were imprisoned in York for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the King and forty of these died in the prisons at York Castle, Monk Bar and Ouse Bridge.

6. The York Dungeons

Visit York Dungeon where there is an exhibition on Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot.



All Saints Pavement

7. All Saints Pavement

On the wall inside this ancient church you will find the helmet, sword and gauntlets of Thomas Percy, 7th Earl of Northumbria. On the pavement outside he was humiliated and beheaded without trial on a specially constructed scaffold without trial for leading the Catholic uprising of 1569. Just before his death he made a speech, a public profession of faith, which apparently inspired Margaret Clitherow to convert to Catholicism.



The execution of Margaret Clitherow

8. The Shambles

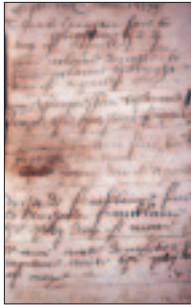
The Shambles today looks almost exactly as it did in the time of Guy Fawkes. Since medieval times this was the butchers street. Margaret Clitherow was married to a butcher and lived on this street. In her house she allowed secret masses to be said. In 1586 she was betrayed. Her tragedy gripped the city and quite possibly the 16 year old Guy Fawkes. The last priest to give communion in the Shambles was Francis Ingleby, who was a close relation of the Winter brothers, who were both very active in the gunpowder Plot. He was hung, drawn and quartered on York's Knavesmire in 1586. .



St Peter's School (not open to the public)

9. Guy Fawkes birthplace

Two buildings near the corner of Stonegate and Petergate claim to be the original birthplace of the infamous Guy Fawkes. William Fawkes, Guy's grandfather, married and settled in St Michael-le-Belfry parish and worked as a Church lawyer. Guy's father, Edward, followed him into the Church Courts and became Advocate of the Archbishop's Consistory Court. Guy Fawkes grandparents, William and Ellen are buried in York Minster and when Guy's father died in 1579 he was also buried in the Minster near his parents.



Guy Fawkes
Baptismal record

10. St Michael-le-Belfry

Guy Fawkes and both of his sisters were baptised in St Michael-le-Belfry Church. You can see a facsimile of Guy's baptismal entry just inside the west entrance to the church. When his father died, Guy's mother re married into a catholic family with close ties to the Percy family of Northumbria (known rebels against the King of England), the Ingleby's and the Pulleyn's. John Pulleyn was headmaster at St Peters where, along with several of the other Gunpowder Conspirators, Guy Fawkes went to school. By coincidence, Guy inherited (from his father) the land where the present day buildings of St Peter's school stand. The proceeds of the sale of the land allowed Guy to leave York to fight in the religious wars on the continent. To this day the school do not burn a 'guy' on bonfire night.

Exploring York

York has a rich and colourful history that dates right back to Roman times. All around are clues to its past. Walking through the streets of York is the best way to unravel its many stories and to savour the rich architecture and archaeology at every turn.



Exploring York walking trails are available from the Tourist Information Centres and other outlets in York. All the trails are available online at www.visityork.org/explore

Tourist Information Centre

To book accommodation in York and for all other visitor enquiries;
Tel: 01904 621756

Website: www.visityork.org

Park and Ride Bus Services

Buses run to the city centre every 10 minutes or less

White Line (from Askham Bar on the A64) 01904 551400

Yellow Line (from Grimston Bar on the A1079) 01904 551400

Green Line (from Rawcliffe Bar on the A19) 01904 551400

Red Line (from the Designer Outlet A19 / A64) 01904 551400

Silver line (from Monks Cross on the A1036) 01904 551400

Shopmobility

Visitors are welcome to use the excellent facilities of the Shopmobility scheme. Scooters, powered wheelchairs or manual wheelchairs are available. Shopmobility is located on level 2, Piccadilly Car Park.
Tel: 01904 679222.

Useful Telephone Numbers

• All emergencies	999
• York Police Station	0845 6060247
• York District Hospital	01904 631313
• Lost property city centre	01904 551677

Acknowledgements

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