

WASC 477

ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE

WASC 477

OBSERVER

5 NOVEMBER 1967

WASC 477.

Will you burn the wrong guy tonight?

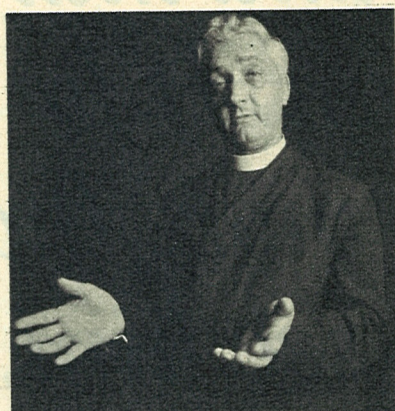


Brian Haynes/Bob Croxford

Bad Guy? Sir Robert Cecil, hunchbacked chief Minister of the Crown. Was he the scheming genius of the Gunpowder Plot?

Fall Guy? Fawkes himself: a mercenary soldier, often hard up for cash. Did he mask the real villain of 5 November?

Was there any gunpowder in the Gunpowder Plot?



Startling new evidence about the Gunpowder Plot has been unearthed by the Jesuit historian Father Francis Edwards (above). It reveals a tale of deceit and murder beside which a Bond novel looks like a children's game. Father Edwards, archivist and historiographer of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, works at Farm Street Church, Mayfair, in a room crammed with files, photostats and card indexes. They are his weapons for unravelling the multitudinous plots which infested British history between 1560 and 1610. He started on the Gunpowder Plot seven years ago, with only an article in mind. But he found he was uncovering fascinating new clues about the shady people around the plot. He's now writing a full-length book. Is this the long arm of the Jesuits reaching out after 350 years to get their old enemy Robert Cecil? 'No,' says Edwards. 'At last, it's becoming possible for historians to study the period without their findings being used as weapons in religious controversy.'

Produced by Brian Haynes / photographs Bob Croxford / drawings by Adrian George / cover picture of Cecil from National Portrait Gallery

On the Gunpowder trail, by Colin Cross

The traditional story of Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot is shot through with bizarre improbabilities. This, of course, is why it is such a good story and partly why after 3½ centuries Guy Fawkes's Day is still an English national festival.

The very idea of blowing up the entire Royal Family, Government and Parliament is so monstrous as now to seem humorous. It's funny to think of the whole 'establishment' going up in one bang. It is so remote from reality that today even Roman Catholic families hold bonfire parties and burn Guy Fawkes in effigy.

What is obviously fishy about the traditional story?

Firstly, most actual or attempted assassinations in history have been the work of crazy fanatics, but Robert Catesby, the ringleader of this plot, and his colleagues were not fanatical men. They were, in fact, gentlemanly layabouts, short of money. They professed the Roman Catholic religion but were far from being devout.

Also they were quite intelligent. Yet assuming for a moment that the Gunpowder Plot was a serious venture, they made no adequate preparation for taking over the government of the country.

Then there are the mechanics of the plot.

Figures vary, but it has been claimed that they placed 36 barrels of gunpowder (3 tons 4 cwt) in the basement of the House of Lords. It was supposed to have been left there for eight months. This would be difficult to do today without being seen and it would have been even more difficult in 1605. The area immediately around Parliament in 1605 was thickly populated. And, for that matter, where did they get the gunpowder in such a vast quantity? The manufacture of gunpowder was under Crown control in what amounted to a Police State, with Government spies everywhere.

After the 'discovery' of the plot, the cellar and the area immediately around it were cordoned off. Nobody outside the Government was allowed in. Since it is agreed by everybody that the

Government was eager to make the maximum propaganda use of the plot, why were there no conducted tours of the site?

Knyvett, keeper of the Palace of Westminster, was soon after honoured – odd treatment for a man negligent enough to have allowed a massive build-up of gunpowder under his nose.

Then there was the letter warning the Roman Catholic peer Lord Monteagle not to attend Parliament. It arrived when he was giving a dinner party. He had it read straight out aloud, scarcely glancing at it first. This is not a normal way of dealing with a letter and bears, indeed, the marks of play-acting. Monteagle, it seems likely, knew what the letter was going to contain and wanted to put it over to his guests. The Government gave him a pension of £700 a year. It is possible that Monteagle was 'Roman Catholic' only during the actual period of the plot; there is evidence of his conforming to the Anglican Church on occasions before and after it.

From the point of view of the Government, the Gunpowder Plot was a boon. It had a sort of Pearl Harbour effect. Here was drama to capture the public imagination and turn popular feelings against the Roman Catholics, which was exactly what the Government wanted. The propaganda exploitation worked superbly well and Roman Catholicism ceased to be a serious force in England.

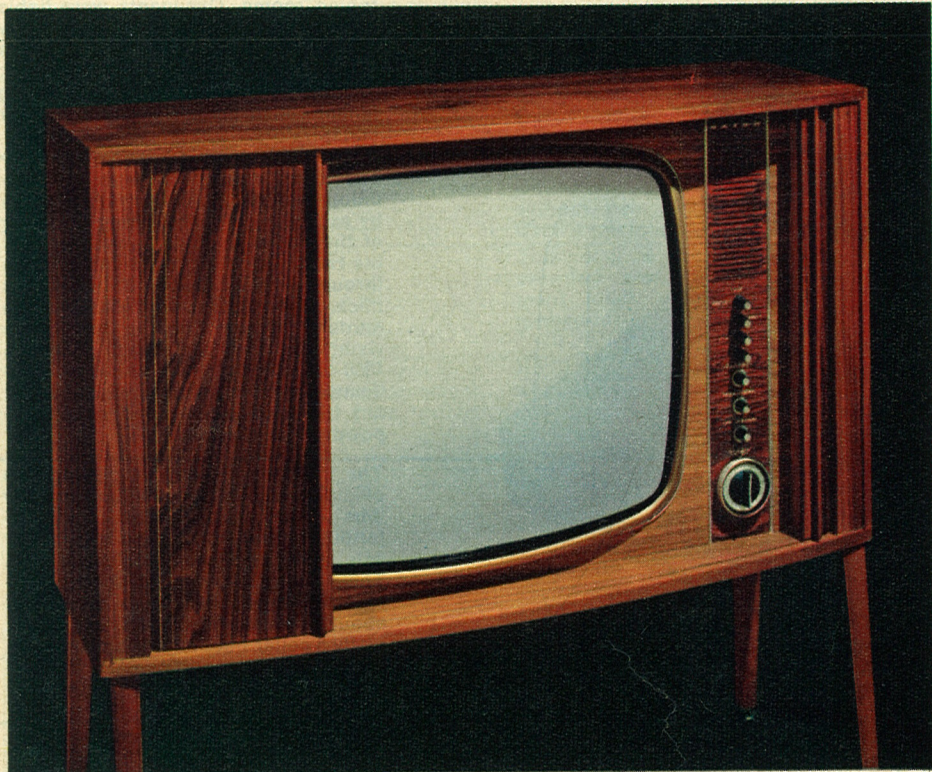
It has long been agreed that the Government knew more about the plot than it said. The warning letter to Monteagle and the search of the cellars the night before Parliament met have always sounded phoney. The assumption has been that the Government was content to allow the plot to go ahead so that it could be exposed at the most advantageous moment.

But is it possible to go one stage further than that? Can it be shown that there never was a proper plot at all? Was it all instigated by the Government? If this could be proved, most of the discrepancies and improbabilities in the story would at once disappear.

Of course it *cannot* be proved – for the reason that the evidence in favour of such a theory is circumstantial, not direct. */continued*

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THE CONSPIRACY

How the Gunpowder Plot unfolded, on hypothesis of Fr Francis Edwards, SJ.



Sir Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (above), chief Minister of King James I of England, sought to extirpate Roman Catholicism, which he hated, and to advance his own power. On the hypothesis explained here, he planned the Gunpowder Plot with both these ends in view. It would discredit the Roman Catholics and he would get the glory for 'discovering' it. The following material is based on this hypothesis and shows how the plot *could* have unfolded. To begin with, Cecil enlists Thomas Percy (above right), an adventurer with wide contacts and willing to do anything for money. Percy, in his turn, gets Catesby, the nominal leader of the conspiracy, and five others to form a gang. He pays them and convinces them that when the plot is 'discovered' they will be safe from

execution - either by royal pardon or by being allowed to escape. Catesby and Co. bring in others without telling them that the affair is Government-inspired; they think these will be the scapegoats for execution. For plausibility, the 'innocents' are told that a *coup d'état* will follow the explosion. The King's nine-year-old daughter Princess Elizabeth will be seized from Combe Abbey, where she lives, and proclaimed Queen, with Catesby as Regent. Probably there is no actual gunpowder involved in the plot. No record exists of its removal from the basement and it is unlikely that Parliament would have met on 5 November with a colossal stack of gunpowder underneath which could have gone off accidentally. Accidents with explosives were a common hazard of the period.

THE GANG 1

Those who know the plot is rigged and are promised safety and money.

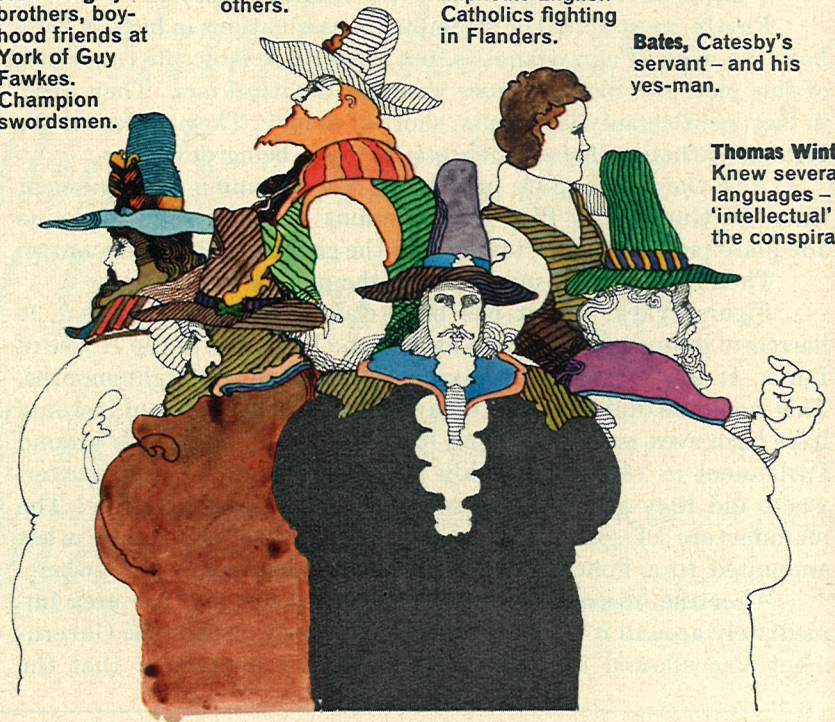
Christopher and John Wright, brothers, boy-hood friends at York of Guy Fawkes. Champion swordsmen.

Robert Catesby, charming rogue and ringleader. Aged 35 - rather older than the others.

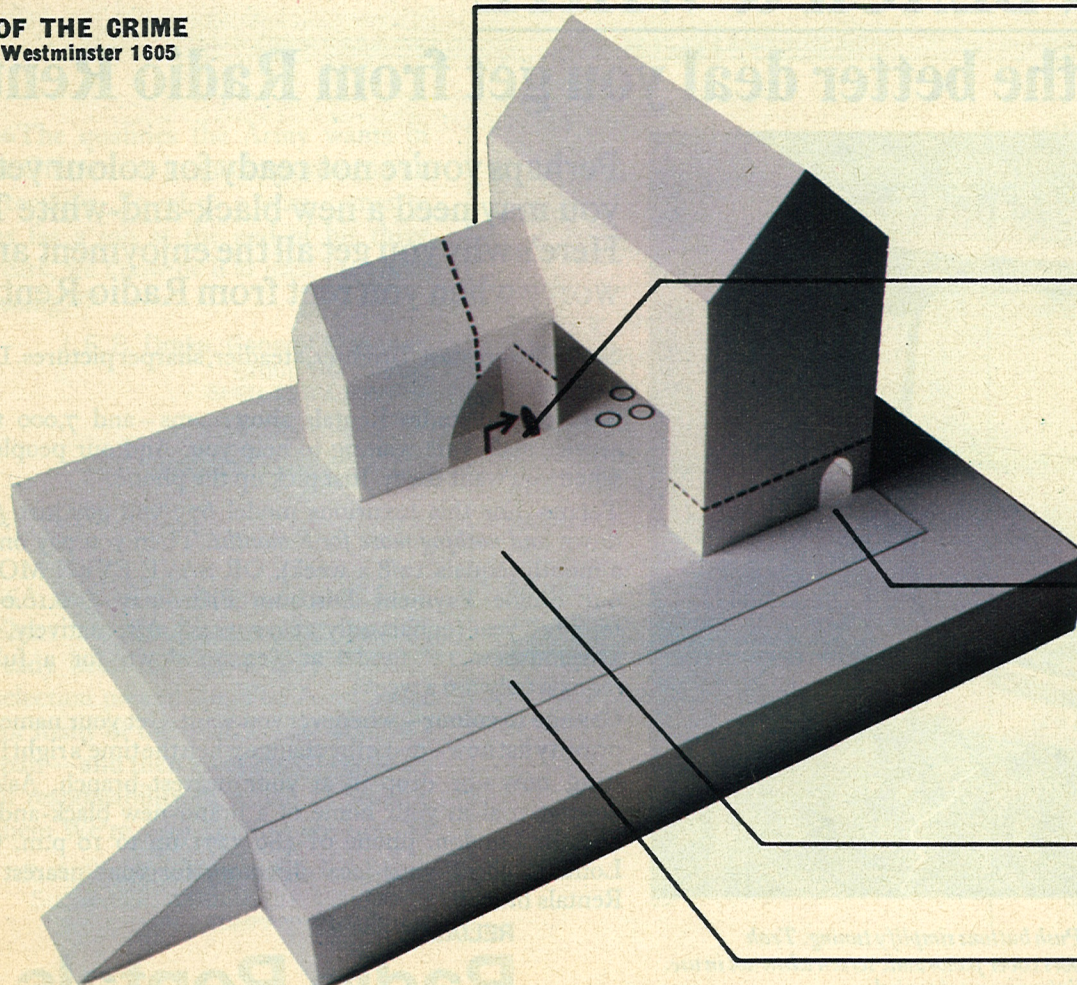
Guy Fawkes, soldier from Flanders wars. Hired to implicate English Catholics fighting in Flanders.

Bates, Catesby's servant - and his yes-man.

Thomas Winter. Knew several languages - the 'intellectual' of the conspiracy.



SCENE OF THE CRIME
Palace of Westminster 1605



House next to the House of Lords. Contemporary evidence suggests that it was let out when not needed for official purposes, for example Lords' committees. It was often used as peers' robing rooms. Occupants were liable to be disturbed at any moment by official requisitioning. Owner was Whinnyard, under Cecil's authority; a court official, he ejected a sitting tenant called Ferrers to make way for conspirators.

The tunnel. According to the traditional story the conspirators begin by excavating a tunnel from the cellar of the house into the foundations of the House of Lords. This entails going through a wall between 9 and 11 feet thick. They dump the rubble in the garden. (Where it would have been visible to any passer-by.) Between 1800 and 1823 these buildings were demolished. No positive evidence that any trace was then found of a Gunpowder Plot tunnel.

The 'cellar'. Then, according to official accounts, the conspirators pay 'Mrs Bright', the caretaker (a mysterious figure), for access to a 'cellar' actually under the Lords' chamber'. Their gunpowder lies there from March to November. (Stock is renewed about September.) In fact this is not really a cellar but more of a basement, a commodious apartment on ground level, the kind of place to which many could have access.

The garden where the conspirators were supposed to have dumped the rubble from the excavations. This was in full public view!

Alley to river. Supposed route for bringing in the gunpowder.

THE GANG 2

Those not in the know: 'innocents' to be sacrificed.



DOUBLE AGENT?

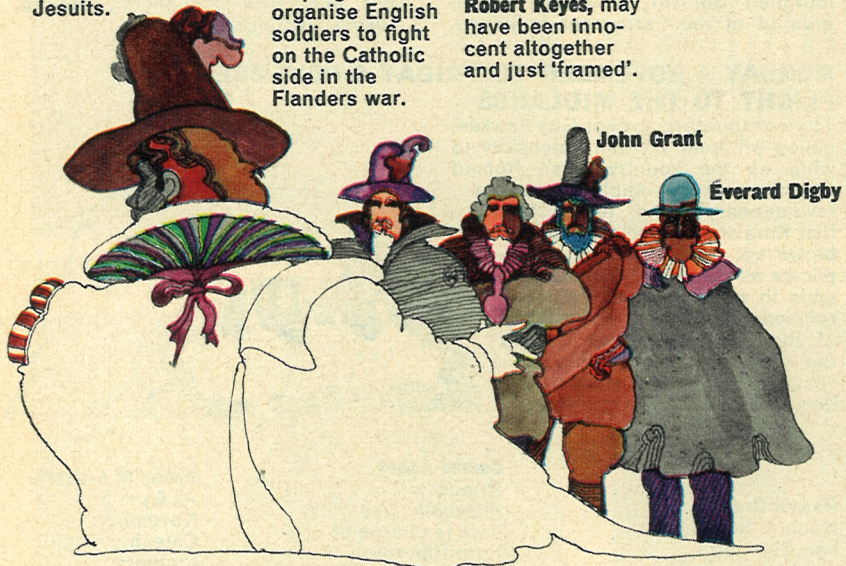
Cecil spy posing as an 'innocent'.

Francis Tresham (or Tresam), related to Catesby and the Winters, brother-in-law of Lord Monteagle. Had been in debt but inherited a fortune shortly before the 'discovery' of the plot.

Robert Winter, brother of Thomas Winter. Had Jesuitical contacts and so brought in partly to implicate Jesuits.

Rockwood, a very rich military man helping to organise English soldiers to fight on the Catholic side in the Flanders war.

Robert Keyes, may have been innocent altogether and just 'framed'.



John Grant

Everard Digby

continued/It rests as much upon negative evidence – for instance the gunpowder records for 1605 are missing from the Tower of London – as upon positive fact. All that can be said is that there is an enormous volume of tiny bits of evidence of this nature. It would be tedious to catalogue them all. Most look trivial; only in bulk do they produce a massive case.

At first sight, the idea of the Government inventing the plot might sound even more fantastic than the idea of it being genuine.

In fact, the opposite is the truth. For the Government to have invented the plot would have been a sane, clever action, fitted exactly to its policy. Moreover it would match the personality of the chief Minister, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, who, conceivably, actually wrote the Monteagle letter in his own hand. He was the kind of person that his descendant, the present Marquess of Salisbury, might well dismiss as 'too clever by half'. A limping hunchback, Cecil was ambitious, unscrupulous and bitterly anti-Catholic. His attitude to Catholicism was similar to that of, say, the John Birch Society to Marxism. He was an expert manipulator – who while chief Minister of England accepted annual bribes from the King of Spain. He knew how to play on men's weaknesses.

The Gunpowder Plot was of both personal and political benefit to him – it confirmed his standing with King James I, for he appeared as savior of the King's life; it discredited the Roman Catholics at home; it checked foreign protests against persecution of Catholicism.

Then Catesby: would he have played along with Cecil?

The answer must be in the affirmative. He was a mature Elizabethan buck apparently with an eye for girls and certainly a swashbuckling taste for political adventure. Contemporaries, including at least one of his Gunpowder Plot associates, reckoned him to be untruthful and untrustworthy. He was often in hot water, lived above his income and was of loose religious affiliation.

The link between Cecil and Catesby would appear to be Thomas Percy, another loose man. According to one good authority, Percy kept one wife in the south of England and another in the north and enjoyed listening to lectures on atheism. Nominally Catholic, he was certainly in touch both with the Government and the Catholics.

Cecil's method of getting the plot going may not have been entirely by financial bribery: he may also have exploited divisions between the English Catholics.

The mass of devotees of the old faith wanted no more than to live quietly with access to Catholic sacraments. They had no high ambition to reconvert the rest of the nation to Catholicism or to set up a Catholic Government. While they were often willing to suffer and to pay enormous fines, they took no joy in martyrdom.

Then there was the smaller, more enthusiastic group, products of the Counter-Reformation, who thought it the most important thing in the world to bring England back to the Church. With Jesuits in the van, they dedicated themselves to missionary work and consciously expected to end their lives on the quartering block. (But the Jesuits were explicitly opposed to terrorist methods.)

Many of the moderates longed for a compromise with the Government by which the Jesuits and other enthusiasts would cease operations. In return the Government would tolerate quiet Catholics.

Cecil did not want to tolerate any Catholics at all. But, dissembling, he might have sold the idea of the Gunpowder Plot to moderates on the ground that it would discredit the enthusiasts and so strengthen the moderates. (He was a good salesman.)

However it was, whether by money or subterfuge or both, Cecil would have been capable, morally and technically, of getting the plot going. Moreover the nature of the plot – to blow up the King in Parliament – bore marks of propaganda genius. It was a far more stirring notion than just assassinating the shambling, homosexual King James I: Cecil was a genius at propaganda.

On this supposition, Catesby and Percy assembled the band of eight conspirators of whom, apart from these two principals, Thomas Winter, Bates, the Wright brothers, Keyes and Grant almost certainly agreed to concoct a plot. The soldier/*continued*

GUN-POWDER

OLD THEORY. Traditional story of the plot, based on the confessions of G. Fawkes and T. Winter and the Jesuit chroniclers Gerard and Greenway.

NEW THEORY. Hypothesis questioning the accuracy of these documents and relying upon only completely reliable contemporary material.

Quantity	72 barrels. (Two consignments of 36.)	Too much to sound credible. Equivalent to one month's national supply.
Cost	£500 – in modern value £10,000.	The plotters were relatively poor. (Although conceivably Percy could have got the money because he was an active embezzler.)
Source	Could have come from abroad.	Difficult to import so much without being detected by Cecil's efficient secret police.
Eye-witnesses of the powder being brought to the basement?	None recorded.	This was a busy, often crowded area. The basement itself an accessible ground-level room.
Eye-witnesses of the powder after Fawkes's arrest?	None recorded but assumed to have existed. Basement cordoned off from public view.	No first-hand evidence whatsoever that anybody outside the Government was shown the powder (e.g. foreign ambassadors).
When was the powder removed?	No record.	Parliament met the morning after the plot had been 'discovered' immediately above where the powder was supposed to be. Accidental explosions a known hazard and Cecil not the man to take unnecessary risks. Strange that there should be no account or eye-witnesses of vast quantities of gunpowder being trundled out quickly.
Where was the powder put by the Government?	No record.	Obvious storage place was the Tower of London. Ordnance records there for 1605 missing – accident or design?
Was there any powder?	Of course.	Probably not.

continued/Guy Fawkes also agreed to implicating the Catholics, if not the Jesuits, and with Winter drew up in the Tower the 'confessions' which were the official tale of the plot as it passed into history. Others were brought in, mostly at the last moment, on the assumption that the conspiracy was genuine. They were to be the scapegoats for execution.

During 1604 and 1605 there were an unusual number of summonings and proroguing of Parliament. On the supposition of Cecil being behind the plot, he was manoeuvring to get a State opening of Parliament to coincide with Catesby's convenience.

Finally, after the plot had been 'discovered', Catesby galloped up to the Midlands and went from Catholic house to Catholic house announcing that the King and Cecil were dead and calling upon Catholics to rise in revolt. Few in fact agreed to do so. But why did Catesby tell such lies? His conduct is explicable only on the ground that he was acting as Cecil's *agent provocateur* to get as many Catholics as possible implicated in the gunpowder drama.

Against this theory there stands one enormous objection.

The penalty for high treason was to be hanged until half dead. Then the victim was cut down. The executioner ripped open with a knife the victim's stomach, pulled out heart and entrails and burnt them. The victim's genitals got the same treatment. Finally the victim was beheaded and his body cut into four quarters.

Most of the conspirators who were not killed while being arrested suffered this hideous treatment.

What possible motive could there be for Catesby and his friends to embark on a plot which they knew would be 'discovered'?

The explanation, if it is true that Cecil instigated the plot, is a cynical doublecross. Cecil promised the conspirators they would be allowed to escape or pardoned and then broke his promise.

How to convince Catesby and Co. they would not be executed?

There was the precedent of the 'Main Plot' three years previously. The conspirators in that had reached the scaffold and were kneeling in the straw and about to put their heads on the block when a royal messenger with the King's pardon dramatically revealed himself. Cecil could have assured the gunpowder conspirators that the same thing would happen to them.

Indirect support for the notion of Cecil doublecrossing the conspirators comes in the strange deaths of Catesby and Percy at Holbeche. The local sheriff arrived with a posse to arrest them. The two marched out of house back to back, Percy holding a crucifix. The sheriff's men shot them dead.

Now surely the aim of the sheriff should have been to capture them alive. That in the normal way would have won him most credit from London. Catesby and Percy could easily have been captured alive - the crucifix, presumably, being a form of white flag or else some prearranged sign. Shooting them down silenced them and also spared them the executioner's knife.

The other conspirators were lodged in the Tower in exceptionally comfortable conditions, which was odd, because they were supposed to be murderers and traitors of the worst kind. They had plentiful food and drink and were allowed an unlimited supply of tobacco, which was then a luxury. At their trial in Westminster Hall they looked nonchalant and unconcerned. They attempted neither to justify their conspiracy nor to beg for mercy. Such conduct is compatible with the notion that they regarded the trial as just a formality and thought they were secure from execution. (Their high living must have increased their sense of security.)

One can imagine them going to the scaffold with the same unconcern. Until almost the last, they would have assumed they were all right. Not enough was recorded about the actual circumstances of the executions to determine whether they made any last-minute attempt to address the crowd and tell of Cecil's perfidy. But it would have been a normal procedure had their voices been drowned in a roll of drums, or the sheriffs had prevented them from speaking.

Of course this theory is tenuous. There are gaps. But it explains some otherwise incomprehensible aspects of the Gunpowder Plot. Just possibly, tonight should we burn not a Guy but a Robert?

SATURDAY 26 OCTOBER 'BETRAYAL'

Lord Monteagle, dubiously Roman Catholic and newly-created peer about to take his seat in the House of Lords, well-known to the conspirators, arrives unexpectedly at his house in Hoxton, where he has not been for a year. While dining in company he receives a letter. (Written by Robert Cecil?) Hardly glancing at it, he commands it to be read aloud. (Did this mean he already knew what it contained?) It warns him to stay away from the opening of Parliament on 5 November and hints at a great 'blow'. He sends the letter to Cecil, who shows it to the King and allows the King to arrive at the conclusion that a murderous conspiracy is afoot. (King James I, son of Mary Queen of Scots, had lived from babyhood in an atmosphere of plots and intrigue.) But no immediate search ordered of the Parliament buildings.



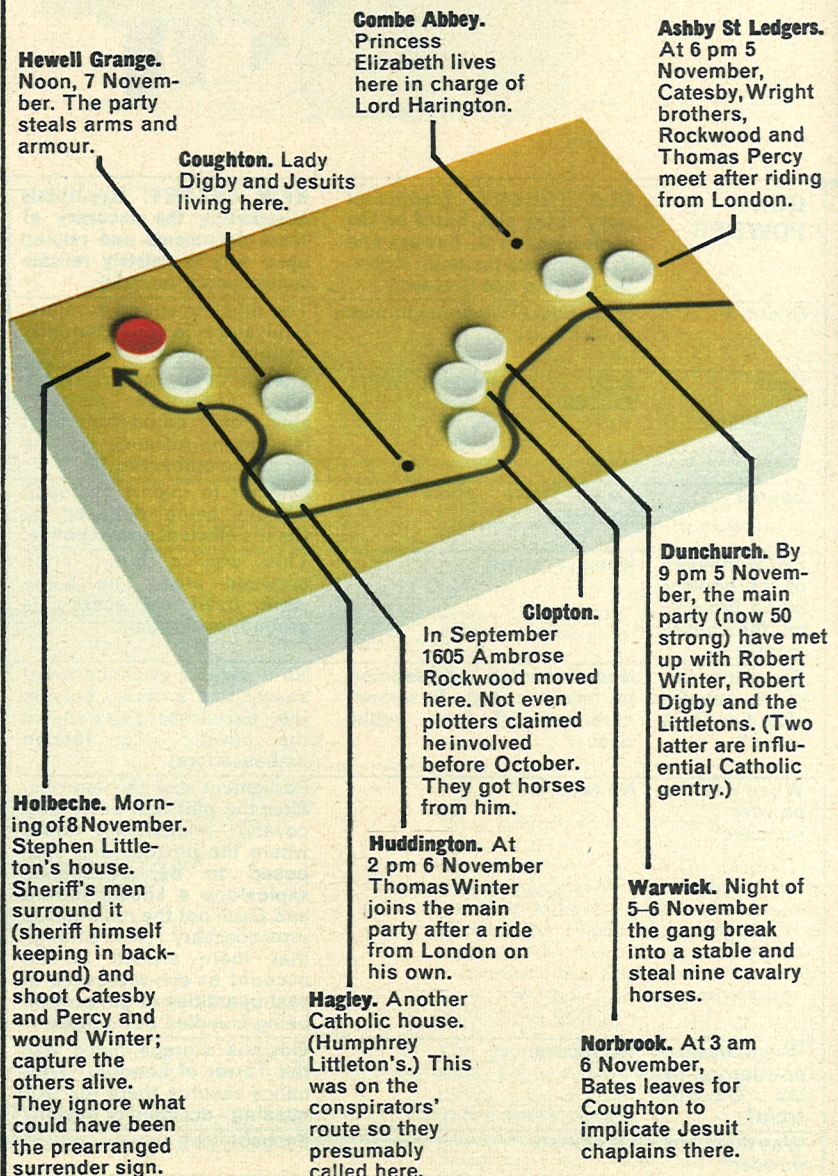
Monteagle, according to Exchequer records, later given a pension of £700 a year—worth £14,000 in modern money—reason inadequately explained.

MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER FIRST SEARCH

In the afternoon Monteagle and officials examine the House of Lords, including the basement. They find nothing—except Guy Fawkes hanging around looking unconcerned.

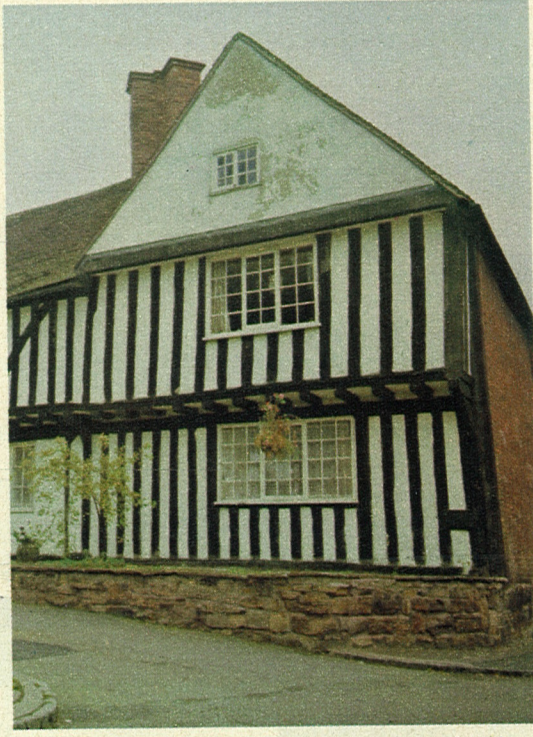
MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER TO FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER FLIGHT TO THE MIDLANDS

The conspirators, except Guy Fawkes, gallop off from London ostensibly to whip up the country-house Roman Catholics of the Midlands into a revolutionary rising, telling them that King and Parliament had been blown up. Real motive is to implicate as many Catholics as possible in treason. Most Catholics refused to collaborate but a group of about 50 whipped up. (Mostly the conspirators and their servants.) All outsiders leave when they realise what is happening.





Ashby St Ledger, where Catesby lived with his mother. Had sold his own house to pay political fines.



Dunchurch, market town with inns on London-Birmingham road. Assembly point for plotters.



Coughton, home of major Roman Catholic family, the Throckmortons, relations of Catesby and Tresham.



Huddington, Winter estate. Robert Winter had it with income of 1,000 marks (£15,000). Was he 'framed'?



Holbeche, scene of the plotters' 'last stand'. Catesby and Percy mysteriously shot, not captured alive.



Coombe Abbey, home of 9-year-old Princess Elizabeth supposed to be plotters' candidate for the throne.

**MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER
SECOND SEARCH**

At 11 pm the plot is 'discovered' and Guy Fawkes is arrested. Official accounts vary on whether the arrest is in the House of Lords basement, outside the basement or in his lodgings. The picture on the right shows the lantern he was holding at the moment of his arrest; it is now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



**MONDAY 27 JANUARY
TRIAL**

In court the conspirators look nonchalant. They are living well in the Tower

with food, drink and tobacco sent in. Normal Tower warders replaced by special men sent in by Cecil. Believing they are safe, they make no attempt at the trial to justify or to defend themselves or to plead for mercy. Before each session they go to the Star Chamber where, possibly, they are privately 'briefed'. They are found guilty of treason.

**23 DECEMBER
DOUBLE AGENT 'DIES'**

Government announces that Francis Tresham - Cecil's spy planted to keep an eye on the other conspirators - has 'died' in the Tower. But later rumours suggest he has been seen in France. Was he secretly let out by Cecil?

SENTENCE AND EXECUTION

Special committee, including Anglican bishops, set up to try to devise an especially horrible and painful form of execution to fit the nature of the 'crime'. But the members are unable to think

up anything suitable and settle for the conventional hanging, drawing and quartering. While this was going on the conspirators could have been kept happy by their high living in the Tower and by assurances from the special warders that they were safe. But the executions are carried out, in two batches. On the pretext of avoiding disorder, the crowds, apparently, are kept well back. Was this to prevent people hearing the plotters' cries of angry disillusion? Also their voices could have been drowned by drums.

RESULTS

- 1 Roman Catholics, both 'enthusiasts' and 'moderates', discredited and they cease to be a political force.
- 2 Dissensions among Roman Catholics themselves.
- 3 English Catholic regiment which is fighting in Flanders wars is discredited. (Fawkes and other plotters had close

associations with it.) Recruiting for it diminishes drastically, thus reducing the danger of trained Catholic soldiers returning home with military challenge.

- 4 Foreign Governments become less able to intercede on behalf of English Roman Catholics.
- 5 The anti-Catholic legislation of 1606 passes much more easily through Parliament than it would otherwise.
- 6 Cecil obtains the total confidence of James I.
- 7 Ultimate result: In 1606 Act of Parliament establishes 5 November as an English national festival. Long after original propaganda purpose forgotten, it continues; for example to this day the Lords' basement is ceremonially 'searched' for gunpowder before the State Opening of Parliament. Do bonfires, fireworks and ritual burning of a victim correspond to some quasi-pagan instinct to combat November fogs and approach of winter?

Charts and drawings by Adrian George/Nigel Holmes/David Driver

THE MOST DAMNING POINTER OF ALL

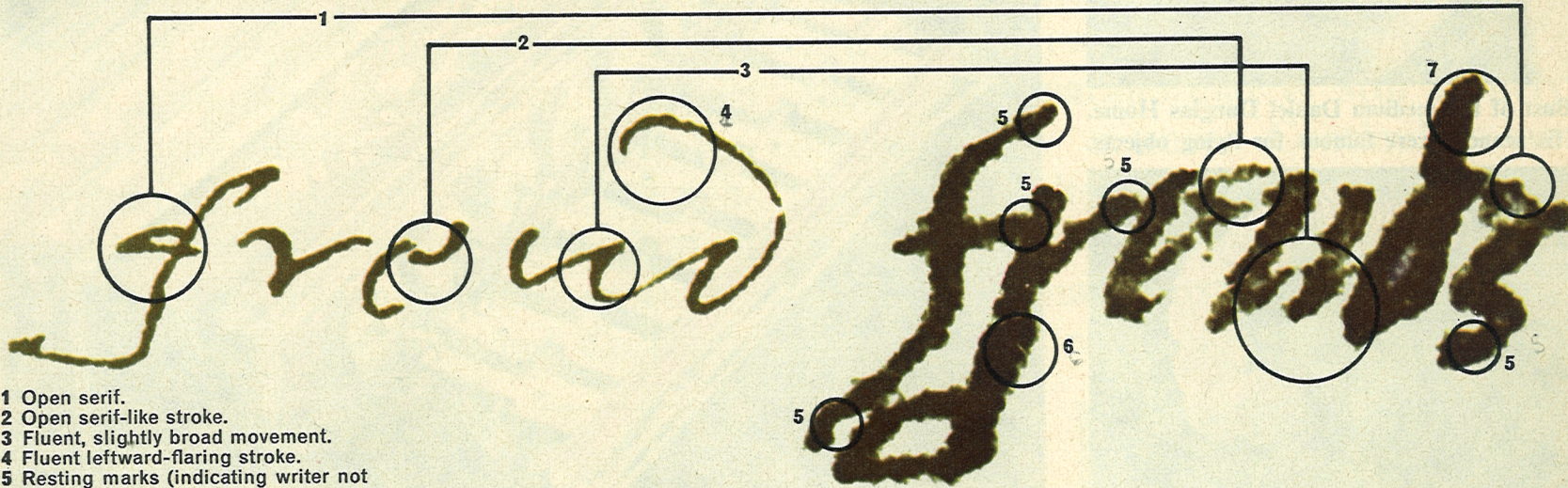
Did Robert Cecil, the ingenious chief Minister of England, for a moment let his mask slip and so, 352 years later, reveal himself as the man behind the Gunpowder Plot? What now looks as if it could be his one careless act is the anonymous 'warning letter' to Lord Monteagle, the mechanism through which the plot was officially 'exposed'. Today it hangs framed in the museum of the Public Record Office, London. Was that letter written, in a disguised hand, by Cecil himself? Superficial examination

showed obvious similarities between Cecil's handwriting and that in the Monteagle letter. But, at first sight, the possibility of Cecil having written it, although entertaining, seemed too fantastic, too damning to be true. Further thought, however, led to the possibility that if Cecil were behind the plot, he was probably the only person who knew all the convolutions. Accordingly, knowing nothing of twentieth-century techniques of handwriting analysis, he could well have reserved for himself the delicate task of writing the letter. Indeed one can imagine him chuckling over it. The Observer invited in Miss Joan

Cambridge, one of Britain's leading authorities on handwriting. Miss Cambridge is a professional document examiner, accustomed to giving expert evidence in courts of law, and also chairman of Scientific Graphologists (England). She was asked to make a microscopic examination of original documents at the Public Record Office and to report, as if in a forgery case. Officials at the Public Record Office helped by removing the Monteagle letter from their museum for her to examine. Here are Miss Cambridge's answers to a series of questions. 1 Was the Monteagle letter written by

somebody attempting to disguise his hand? 'Yes, beyond doubt.' 2 Could either Francis Tresham or the Jesuit Father Garnett have written it? (In traditional accounts they have been suggested as possible authors.) 'Extremely unlikely for Tresham to have written it and virtually impossible for Garnett to have done so.' 3 Could Cecil have written it? 'Yes, beyond doubt.' 4 Did Cecil write it? 'Probably he did, a 70 per cent probability. I can't go further than that because there are special factors of the ink and paper having aged. But I'm reasonably satisfied in my own mind that he did.'

HANDWRITINGS COMPARED. Left: The word 'friend' in Cecil's ordinary writing Right: How the same word appears in the Monteagle letter.



- 1 Open serif.
- 2 Open serif-like stroke.
- 3 Fluent, slightly broad movement.
- 4 Fluent leftward-flaring stroke.
- 5 Resting marks (indicating writer not using his normal hand).
- 6 Heavy pressure, with awkwardly restricted movement.
- 7 Initial movement amended; result heavy and arhythmic.

Handwriting specimens Crown Copyright. Public Record Office references SP 14/216/2, SP 14/22/59, SP 14/216/205, SP/22/59.

The details - Joan Cambridge's technical report
Before considering the possible authorship of this historic document [the Monteagle letter], it is necessary to assess whether, and if so to what degree, the script is disguised from the writer's normal graphic movement. Examination provides considerable evidence of deliberation and over-control, mainly in the form of abnormal increases in pressure, with marks where the pen momentarily rested. It is also apparent that contrary to his natural inclination the writer was doing his best to adhere to the contemporary formal script. The most interesting feature in respect

of deliberation is the stilted manner in which, with one significant exception, the letter 'd' is formed throughout. The exception is the 'd' in 'friends' in the first line. Close examination shows that initially this consisted of a fluent, slightly leftward movement. Then, as if aware that this personal gesture might disclose his identity, the writer amended the stroke so that it appears stilted and arhythmic as do other 'd's' in the document. Accepting the fact of disguise, an attempt must be made to break through the masked forms to obtain an indication of the writer's normal style. Apart from the stilted 'd' forms, which indicate a naturally fluent movement in writing that specific, there is evidence

of self-conscious control in the lower loop of the 'g' form, suggesting an awareness of individuality in these extensions. Indeed in the sample of the last two lines of the Monteagle text, reproduced below, it can be seen that 'god' was originally written as 'yod' as, subconsciously, the writer sought to avoid the offending 'g'. Also spontaneous writing habits, of which the writer was unaware, occur throughout the text. Of these the serif-like stroke on the 'e' form is the most significant, because it appears throughout, although the habit of amplifying the 't'-bar stroke and the fluent 'h' and 's' forms must not be ignored. Examination of original documents written and signed by Robert Cecil

shows that his natural graphic movement, normal pressure pattern and character of stroke allow of the possibility that he wrote the Monteagle letter. Further to this, examination of his spontaneous letter-forms, particularly 'h', 's' and 'e', indicate definite similarities with those in the Monteagle letter. Then his naturally leftward flaring 'd' forms and highly individualistic 'g' forms are compatible with the restrictions exercised on those forms in disguise, while his habit of adding a stroke to his 'e's' has a definite parallel in the anonymous note. So on aggregate there is sufficient evidence to support an opinion that in all probability Cecil himself wrote the Monteagle warning.

Extract from an authentic letter in Cecil's handwriting.

I warrant to y^e Exchequer to be to our lea-
ding a Blank and so y^e other

Extract from the Monteagle letter.

and I hope you will give you the grace to
use of it to whose holy protection I commend you

Signature of Francis Tresham.

Francis Tresham

Signature of the Jesuit Henry Garnett.

Henry Garnett