



Local children standing proudly by their Guy Fawkes figure. The figure holds a sign which says: "The only man that ever went to parliament with good intentions" (PR25316.238) Pictures: TORQUAY MUSEUM

Warrant for the execution of Humphrey Lyttelton, gun powder plotter (AR981)

Remember, remember the fifth of November...

Hidden away in Torquay Museum's archive is a remarkable copy document of a warrant for the execution of Humphrey Lyttelton, a gun powder plotter!

Most people know something of the story of the group of men who planned to blow up the Houses of Parliament in November, 1605, and whose plot was foiled by King James I's forces.

What may not be quite so well-known is the connection with the Lyttelton family.

Several of the plotters escaped immediate capture in the aftermath of events at the Houses of Parliament on November 4-5, 1605, and fled London.

Some were subsequently killed in a shoot-out at Holbeach House in Staffordshire and some survivors were captured and tried for treason on January 27, 1606, convicted and sentenced to death.

There are variations and interpretations of the events of 1605 and 1606 but it appears that two Lyttelton family members of the time, Humphrey and Stephen Littleton - some say they were cousins, others uncle and nephew - were part of the wider group of conspirators/recusants who were to organise themselves into a

Barry Chandler from Torquay Museum reveals Torbay's connection with one of Guy Fawkes' 1605 gun powder plotters

company to reinforce a regiment to go to fight in Flanders.

Humphrey was not immediately sought after the discovery of the Plot because he was not directly involved in the events in London or at Holbeach House.

He did, however, give aid to two of the plotters, his relative Stephen Littleton who lived at Holbeach House and Robert Wintour, who had escaped from the Holbeach House fight, by helping them hide out for a while and acting as a go-between for them and a Jesuit priest, Father Oldcorne.

Eventually the two fugitives came to hide out at Hagley House, some say at Humphrey's invitation, while Meriel Littleton, the then owner, was away.

A cook, whom Humphrey had taken into his confidence, reported the situation to the authorities.

Humphrey denied that he was harbouring the fugitives but they

were caught fleeing.

Humphrey himself fled, but was captured at Prestwood, Staffordshire.

Humphrey was tried at Worcester convicted for harbouring Robert Wintour and Stephen Littleton and sentenced to death.

His execution was stayed while his information about the names and hiding places of Jesuit priests was followed up and he was later executed at Redhill, Worcester, with four others on April 7, 1606.

The document can be seen for free in the entrance hall of Torquay Museum until November 15.

It forms part of the exceptional archive collection created by Hester Pengelly and left to the museum in the 1930s.

Another branch of her family lived and collected in Worcester which may explain how a copy of this document ended up in Torquay.



Bonfire night window display at Rossiters, Paignton, on November 5, 1937 (PR25686)