

**FIREWORKS  
BE SAFE  
NOT SORRY**  
ALWAYS FOLLOW THE CODE

**BIS** | Department for Business  
Innovation & Skills

**SCHOOLS PACK - KEY STAGE 3**

Firework Safety

July 2010

- Background note for teachers on the Gunpowder Plot
- Background notes for teachers on Firework Festivals around the world and Fireworks and the Law
- Weekly News Number 19 (1) text sheet for photocopying, supported by a sheet of teaching notes
- Macbeth extract text sheet for photocopying, supported by a sheet of teaching notes
- Newspaper Article text sheet for photocopying, supported by a sheet of teaching notes
- A sheet of teaching notes to support the firework safety poster

This material has been designed primarily to teach the fireworks safety message through use in the Literacy/Citizenship elements of the National Curriculum. The material included also contains cross-curriculum links where appropriate.

We suggest that these lessons are scheduled to take place in the week leading up to November 5th.

The website should be your first port of call for any information on the safe and responsible use of fireworks: [www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks](http://www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks).

## Teachers' planning notes: The Gunpowder Plot

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**Remember, remember the 5th of November,  
Gunpowder, Treason and Plot.**

**I see no reason why Gunpowder Treason  
Should ever be forgot**

The rhyme reminds people why on the 5th of November each year, bonfires are lit around the land – very often with a Guy made of cloth sitting on top.

The Gunpowder Plot took place in 1605. Its roots lay in the politics of the time and the way that religious beliefs divided different sections of the community.

The background to it lay in the unhappiness felt by Catholics about the way they were being treated in England. Eighty years earlier King Henry VIII had broken away from Rome because the Pope refused to let him divorce his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Then when the Protestant Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558 she persecuted Catholics, fearing they may side with an invader from the European continent.

When Elizabeth died in 1603, King James VI of Scotland became James I of England. English Catholic leaders hoped he would be more tolerant. These hopes were quickly dashed however, and the persecution continued.

Most Catholics accepted the situation, but a small number were determined to do something about it and try to force change.

The five central figures of the Gunpowder Plot were Robert Catesby, Thomas Percy, Thomas Wintour, John Wright and – best known of all – Guy Fawkes. Fawkes, who had been born in York in 1570, was a mercenary, or soldier of fortune, who had spent more than 10 years fighting for Spain in Flanders as part of a regiment of English exiles. He was recruited because of his knowledge about the use of gunpowder.

The five swore to blow up James and the Houses of Parliament at the official opening of Parliament, killing the King and all his leading advisers.

They first rented a house near to Parliament and began digging a tunnel, but this plan was abandoned when they came up against the foundations of the Palace of Westminster. Instead Thomas Percy managed to acquire a cellar within the Parliament buildings directly under the House of Lords. Fawkes – posing as Percy's manservant and using the name John Johnson – was installed as caretaker. Here the plotters eventually stacked 36 barrels of gunpowder. They ferried the barrels across the River Thames at night, and hid them under firewood.

Delays in the opening of Parliament and the rising costs incurred by the plotters, who were storing arms at various points around the country for use in the revolt they were planning to lead following the death of the King, led to more people being brought into the conspiracy. All these were close to the original conspirators, most of them being related.

It is believed that it was one of these people – Francis Tresham – who wrote a letter which was delivered to his brother-in-law Lord Monteagle on October 26th, 1605. The letter warned Monteagle not to attend the opening of Parliament. Monteagle immediately took the letter to King James' Secretary of State Robert Cecil.

Despite becoming aware of the existence of the letter, the plotters continued with their plans, sure the authorities remained unaware of the details of the scheme. Guy Fawkes spent the day before the opening of Parliament – scheduled for November 5th – in the cellar containing the gunpowder. A slow burning fuse was in position. Fawkes was to light it and then escape to the continent.

On the night of November 4th, however, searches were made of the cellars beneath the Houses of Parliament. During the first search of the cellar in which Fawkes was holed up it was noticed it contained a suspiciously large amount of firewood. At around midnight a magistrate accompanied by soldiers returned and overpowered Fawkes. The gunpowder was discovered and Fawkes was arrested and taken before the King for questioning.

Despite being tortured he kept up the pretence that he was John Johnson, the servant of Thomas Percy. Government spies had, however, already linked him to Catesby and the other conspirators.

Catesby and most of the others had fled London for the Midlands. They and sympathisers – around 60 in total – finally arrived at Holbeche House on the Staffordshire/Warwickshire border on November 7th. The following day the house was surrounded by a force led by the Sheriff of Worcester. In the fighting that followed, Catesby, Wright and Percy were killed and the other plotters arrested. They were tried and convicted as traitors at the end of January 1606 and were summarily executed. Guy Fawkes and Thomas Wintour, along with two other conspirators, were put to death in the Old Palace Yard at Westminster.

Francis Tresham, believed to have been the author of the letter which alerted the authorities to the Gunpowder Plot, had been taken to the Tower of London following his arrest. It is recorded that he died there in December 1605, possibly as a result of poisoning, though some historians believe he was allowed to escape.

On November 5th 1606, people in London lit bonfires to mark the anniversary of the foiling of the plot to kill the King, beginning a tradition which has survived right through to the present day.

Another tradition also survives. As part of the ritual at the State Opening of Parliament each year, the Yeoman of the Guards, complete with their Tudor uniforms and armed with pikes, carry out a search of the buildings.

**(The Monteaule Letter, now kept in the Public Records Office:**

“My lord, out of the love I bear to some of your friends, I have a care for your preservation. Therefore I would advise you, as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift of your attendance of this Parliament, for God and man hath concurred to punish the wickedness of this time. And think not slightly of this advertisement but retire yourself into your country, where you may expect the event in safety, for though there be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow, the Parliament, and yet they shall not see who hurts them. This counsel is not to be contemned, because it may do you good and can do you no harm, for the danger is past as soon as you have burnt the letter: and I hope God will give you the grace to make good use of it, to whose holy protection I commend you.”)

**Some possible website links:**

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[www.gunpowder-plot.org](http://www.gunpowder-plot.org) (the website of a society devoted to the study of the Gunpowder Plot).

[www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil\\_war\\_revolution/gunpowder\\_haynes\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/gunpowder_haynes_01.shtml)

[www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/g08.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/g08.pdf)

[www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks](http://www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks)

## **Teachers' background notes: Firework Festivals around the world, and Fireworks and the Law**

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Fireworks have been used in festivals and celebrations around the world for many years. The following background information will help you when planning lessons.

Also included here is a brief summary of fireworks and the law.

### **The history of fireworks**

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Firework manufacture probably started in China in the 9th Century. Bamboo shoots were filled with gunpowder and then exploded at New Year. There is more information about how the Chinese New Year is celebrated today in this insert.

It is thought that the first fireworks arrived in Europe in the 1300s. They were brought back by travellers – including the Crusaders – who had been to the East.

Fireworks are used around the world to commemorate events and as part of festivals and celebrations. These are some of the most popular today.

### **Bonfire Night (November 5th)**

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In England, Scotland and Wales fireworks are used to celebrate the anniversary of Guy Fawkes failed attempt to blow up Parliament.

### **Diwali – the festival of lights**

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Diwali has been celebrated by Hindus around the world for thousands of years. It starts on Amavasya. This is the 15th day of the month of Ashwin, which is in either October or November. Diwali means 'row of lights' and the festival lasts for five days. Each day has its own significance with a number of myths, legends and beliefs. Traditionally, rows of little lights are lit in houses to welcome Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity and to drive out evil. Fireworks are lit as part of the celebrations.

You can find out more about Diwali by visiting:

[www.reachgujarat.com/diwali.htm](http://www.reachgujarat.com/diwali.htm)

### **The Chinese New Year**

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The Chinese New Year is celebrated in the middle of February. Preparations start in January when people buy special food and presents, just like at Christmas.

Houses are cleaned from top to bottom and doors and window frames are often painted red. On Chinese New Years Eve people have a special meal

[www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks](http://www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks)

and often wear red cloths to ward off evil spirits. At midnight fireworks are let off in celebration and people visit family and friends with New Year greetings. The end of the New Year is celebrated by the Festival of Lanterns with singing, dancing and lantern shows.

## **National Festivals**

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Other countries have their national equivalents of Bonfire Night. These include:

France – Bastille Day. This is on July 14th and celebrates the storming of the Bastille (prison) during the French Revolution in 1789. French people have parties, parade and firework displays.

America – Independence Day is celebrated on July 4th with fireworks and parties. It commemorates the Declaration of Independence from Great Britain made by the United States of America in 1776. There's lots of information about this at [www.ushistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org)

Canada Day – July 1st. The annual World Fireworks Championship is held in Canada on July 1st. Canada Day is one of Canada's most important holidays and it honours the day that the British colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the province of Canada became united as one country called the Dominion of Canada.

## **Fireworks and the Law**

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Recent years have seen a number of changes in the law surrounding the sale and use of fireworks. These changes are summarised below.

### **Fireworks curfew**

There is a curfew on firework use between 11pm and 7am (in line with the Noise Act), with the exception of the following nights where the curfew will vary:

- (a) November 5th – until midnight
- (b) New Years Eve – 1am on the following day
- (c) Chinese New Year – 1am on the following day
- (d) Diwali – 1am on the following day

### **Fireworks and the under 18s**

Under 18s are not permitted to buy fireworks or to possess them in a public place



### **Retailers' responsibilities**

- As with alcohol sales, retailers are responsible for ensuring they do not sell to under 18s.
- Retailers must not split retail boxes of fireworks
- Retailers wishing to sell fireworks all year round must be licensed

### **The following fireworks must not be supplied to the general public:**

- Aerial wheels.
- Bangers, flash bangers or double bangers.
- Jumping Crackers.
- Jumping ground spinners.
- Spinners.
- Mini rockets.
- Shot tubes – previously known as air bombs.
- Shot tubes – previously known as shell - in – mortar.
- A battery containing bangers, flash bangers or double bangers.
- A combination (other than a wheel) which contains one or more bangers, flash bangers or double bangers.
- All category 4 fireworks



# Teachers' planning notes: Weekly News teaching objectives

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## Word level

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14: define and deploy words with precision, including their exact implication in context;

## Sentence level

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18: identify specific ways sentence structure and punctuation are different in older texts.

## Text level

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### Reading

2: use appropriate reading strategies to extract particular information, e.g. highlighting, scanning;

8: infer and deduce meanings using evidence in the text, identifying where and how meanings are implied;

### Writing

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10: organise texts in ways appropriate to their content, e.g. by chronology, priority, comparison, and signpost this clearly to the reader;

15: express a personal view, adding persuasive emphasis to key points, e.g. by reiteration, exaggeration, repetition, use of rhetorical questions;

### Speaking and listening

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12: use exploratory, hypothetical and speculative talk as a way of researching ideas and expanding thinking.

### Text level work – reading and discussion

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- Tell the story of the Gunpowder Plot – explore the chronology of the story.
- Where does this extract fit into the whole story – what has come before?
- What is the writer of the letter trying to say to Lord Monteaagle?
- Can you predict what Lord Monteaagle would do after reading the letter?

### **Sentence level work**

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- Discuss the use of punctuation in this letter.
- Examine the use of unfamiliar words in the letter.

### **Text level work – writing**

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- Identify the warning in this letter – write it more simply and forcibly in modern English.
- Write a letter to a close friend telling the story of the Gunpowder Plot.
- Write the story as a newspaper report, including the headline.

### **Word level work – spelling and vocabulary**

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- Examine the use of unfamiliar words in this letter.
- Discuss the vocabulary and spelling used by the writer of the letter.
- Prepare a glossary of words which we might not use in the same way today and explain their meaning.

### **Curricular links**

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In history consider the nature of evidence and what it tells us about events in the past.

# Teachers' planning notes: Macbeth teaching objectives

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## Word level

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6: the use of the apostrophe including: omissions; the possessive apostrophe; apostrophising plurals, e.g. ladies' coats, and words ending in s; the exception of possessive pronouns.

## Sentence level

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3: use punctuation to clarify meaning, particularly at the boundaries between sentences and clauses.

## Text level - reading

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8: infer and deduce meanings using evidence in the text, identifying where and how meanings are implied;

20: explore the notion of literary heritage and understand why some texts have been particularly influential or significant. Writing

3: use writing to explore and develop ideas, e.g. journals, brainstorming techniques and mental mapping activities;

6: portray character, directly and indirectly, through description, dialogue and action;

## Speaking and listening

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1: use talk as a tool for clarifying ideas, e.g. by articulating problems or asking pertinent questions.

## Text level work – reading and discussion

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Discuss the possible meanings of what Lennox is saying in this extract.

Discuss the possible references to the Gunpowder Plot.

## Sentence level work

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Discuss the punctuation in this extract – consider how it contributes to meter and rhythm.

## Text level work – writing

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Discuss how historical events might be presented as drama.

Write dialogue for part of a play that reports on events in history – consider how facts, or the particular point of view of the writer might be presented through dialogue.

### **Word level work – spelling and vocabulary**

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Revise the use of the apostrophe – particularly its use to signify letters omitted e.g. i'th'air.

Consider how the apostrophe is used here and its link to meter.

### **Curricular links**

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In history discuss the context of Shakespeare's England – discuss his plays as histories/commentaries.

Consider the possible links in this extract to the Gunpowder Plot.

(Note: Shakespeare wrote Macbeth in 1605 or 1606. It is thought to have first been performed for James I in 1606, the year after the Gunpowder Plot.)

# Teachers' planning notes: Newspaper Article teaching objectives

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## Word level

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14: define and deploy words with precision, including their exact implication in context.

## Sentence level

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3: use punctuation to clarify meaning, particularly at the boundaries between sentences and clauses;

8: recognise the cues to start a new paragraph and use the first sentence effectively to orientate the reader.

## Text level - reading

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7: identify the main points, processes or ideas in a text and how they are sequenced and developed by the writer;

## Writing

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3: use writing to explore and develop ideas, e.g. journals, brainstorming techniques and mental mapping activities;

## Speaking and listening

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15: develop drama techniques to explore in role a variety of situations and texts or respond to stimuli.

## Text level work - reading

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Describe the sequence of events leading up to the girl being injured.

## Writing

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Write the young girl's diary for the few days before the accident.

## Speaking and listening

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- Question the young people involved in the incident – hot seat.
- Discuss the effect of fireworks on animals.

### **Word level work**

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- Examine the headline used in the report – discuss the use of inverted commas.
- Discuss the vocabulary used to describe people in this report e.g. Youths.

### **Sentence level work**

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- Examine the adjectives used to describe the people in this newspaper report – youths.
- Discuss the function of the first sentence in each paragraph. Comment on how it alerts the reader to the fact that there has been a shift in subject matter.

### **Curricular links**

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In PSE examine the social responsibility of behaviour which injures others.

In Citizenship examine the role of the media.

# Teachers' planning notes. Firework Safety Poster - teaching objectives

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## Word level

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14: define and deploy words with precision, including their exact implication in context.

## Sentence level

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13d): instructions, which are helpfully sequenced and signposted, deploy imperative verbs and provide clear guidance.

## Text level - reading

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6: adopt active reading approaches to engage with and make sense of texts, e.g. visualising, predicting, empathising and relating to own experience;

10: identify how media texts are tailored to suit their audience, and recognise that audience;

11: recognise how print, sounds and still or moving images combine to create meaning.

## Writing

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1: plan, draft, edit, revise, proofread and present a text with readers and purpose in mind;

5: structure a story with an arresting opening, a developing plot, a complication, a crisis and a satisfying resolution;

8: experiment with the visual and sound effects of language, including the use of imagery.

## Speaking and listening

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5: promote, justify or defend a point of view using supporting evidence, example and illustration which are linked back to the main argument.

## Text level work – reading and discussion

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Discuss the meanings communicated in the words on the poster.

Discuss the way in which the designer of the poster communicates the central message – consider the effectiveness with students of this age group.



### **Text level work – writing**

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Examine the ways posters are used to communicate information – list other themes – design a poster on one of these themes giving attention to the message and the illustration.

### **Sentence level work**

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This is a warning poster; ask students to explore the central message of the poster.

### **Curricular links**

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Discuss advertising in PSE/Citizenship.

Consider the appropriateness of images on posters and adverts, discussing taste, impact and getting the message across.

WITHDRAWN

## Extracts from the Weekly News

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Number 19, dated Monday 31st January 1606

(1) The following is a copy of a letter, in simplified English, which was left at the house of Lord Monteagle, and which happily led to the discovery of this most horrible conspiracy:

To: Lord Monteagle

My Lord,

Out of the love that I bear to some of your friends I have a care of your preservation, therefore I would advise you, as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift of your attendance at this Parliament: for God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of this time. And think not slightly of this advertisement, but retire yourself into your own country, where you may expect the event in safety.

For though there may be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow this Parliament, and yet they shall not see who hurt them. This counsel is not to be contemned, because it may do you good, and can do you no harm, for the danger is passed as soon as you have burnt this letter, and I hope God will give you the grace to make good use of it.

Anon

## Extract from: Macbeth by William Shakespeare

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LENNOX: Goes the king hence today?

MACBETH: He does – he did appoint so.

LENNOX: The night has been unruly: where we lay,  
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,  
Lamentings heard i'th'air, strange screams of death  
And prophesying with accents terrible  
Of dire combustion and confused events,  
New hatched to th'woeful time. The obscure bird  
Clamoured the livelong night. Some say, the earth  
Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH: 'Twas a rough night.

LENNOX: My young remembrance cannot parallel  
A fellow to it.

MACDUFF: O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart  
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

MACBETH: What's the matter?

MACDUFF: Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!  
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope  
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence  
The life o' the building!

MACBETH: What is 't you say? The life?

LENNOX: Mean you his majesty?

MACDUFF: Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight  
With a new Gorgon: do not bid me speak;  
See, and then speak yourselves.

Exeunt MACBETH and LENNOX

Awake, awake!  
Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!  
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! Awake!  
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,  
And look on death itself! Up, up, and see  
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!  
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,  
To countenance this horror! Ring the bell.

## Firework Girl - 'May be scarred for life'

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A YOUNG girl today faces surgery in hospital for injuries caused by a firework.

The ten-year-old suffered serious burns to her face, hands and arms when she picked up a rocket which then exploded. She had been watching a group of youths setting off fireworks in a play area at Barton Street in Devonholme.

People living nearby said the rocket had been placed in a bottle by one of the youths. The fuse had been lit but the bottle had fallen over. The girl, who had been on swings nearby, ran over to pick it up and at that point the firework had gone off. An ambulance took the girl to the emergency unit at Devonholme Hospital where her condition was last night describe as 'poorly'.

Inspector Peter Smith of Devonholme police said: "She was very badly burnt and it could be that she will be scarred for life. She is the innocent victim of the reckless actions of others.

"Fireworks can bring a lot of joy in their proper place, which is at organised displays or at properly supervised private parties. This is a tragic illustration of the dangers of misusing fireworks."

He said they had spoken to a number of youths following the incident and inquiries were being made as to how they had acquired the fireworks.

Insp. Smith confirmed that police had been called to a disturbance in the same area two nights earlier. That followed complaints from people whose pets had been terrified by the noise of fireworks being set off. However, the youngsters involved had run off before they could speak to them.

# Follow Ben for a safe fireworks night

Fireworks will scare your pets, so keep them safely indoors.

Never give sparklers to a child under five.

If you are given a sparkler, always wear gloves. Always hold sparklers at arm's length and only hold one at a time.

When you are watching fireworks, always stand well back.

Only adults should handle and light fireworks.

Never go near a firework when it has been lit. Even if it hasn't gone off, it could still explode.

When a sparkler goes out, **DON'T TOUCH IT**. It could still burn you, so put it in a bucket of water, hot end down.

You have to be **18 years old** before you are allowed to buy fireworks in the shops.

**Never play with fireworks.** They are dangerous and can hurt you.

**Ben loves fireworks night.** To make sure he stays safe every year, he follows the **Firework Code**.

[www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks](http://www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks)

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