

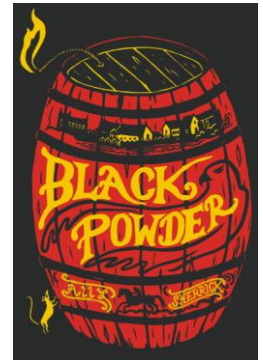
## Write a news story

There was no such thing as newspapers (or TV, radio or the internet) at the time when **Black Powder** is set. Instead, news about big events – and more local ones too – was spread by a combination of things including:

- **Pamphlets** – often, the stories in these were written in the form of ballads or songs
- **Announcements in church** by ministers of religion
- **Letters and messages** delivered on foot or by horse
- **Word of mouth** – from one person to another, which could be very unreliable!

News spread much more slowly in those days for all sorts of reasons. Printing presses printed small quantities of pamphlets and books, and most people couldn't read anyway. And travel was slow and dangerous: it took three days for the messenger to travel from London to Edinburgh to tell King James VI of Scotland Queen Elizabeth I had died and that he was now King James I of England too.

READ ALL ABOUT IT!



### Activity

Imagine you are a newspaper reporter who can travel back in time. Set the dial on your time machine for November 1605. Then, after you've arrived, write a short newspaper article (between 150 and 250 words) and a headline covering one of the big events in **Black Powder**. See an example at the end of this activity sheet for how you could approach it.

**Think:** Before you get started, think about how the key questions you need to cover and answer in your article:

- **Who** is involved?
- **What** did they do?
- **How** did they do it?
- **Why** did they do it?
- **When** did they do it?

You may not know the answers to all of these questions (for example 'How?' or 'Why?') but you could always 'ask' another character for their views or what they saw.

### Story suggestions

- **The arrest of Tom, his mother and baby brother** by Constable Skinner after Tom's father has been forced to flee with the priest, Father Oliver. You could ask the Constable for a comment about this – but remember which side he is on! Or you could ask a neighbour who saw them being arrested...
- **Tom and Cressida's disappearance from Cowdray.** You might want to 'interview' Viscountess Montague or Sergeant Talbot about this. Would they both be feeling the same? And would they have different views about a) Tom and b) Cressida?
- **The capture of Guy Fawkes and the part Tom and Cressida played in this.** You could 'interview' one or both of them to see what they thought about it.
- Or choose your own favourite dramatic part of **Black Powder** and write a news story about that.

### **Local man hangs for stealing constable's pig**

Market Square was the scene of another hanging yesterday, when Henry Cresswell (aged 41), a local Catholic and father of three was executed for stealing one of town constable, Jasper Skinner's pigs.

Cresswell, who had been kept locked up in the town gaol since his trial a week ago, made the sign of the cross on the scaffold but spoke no words.

There were at least one hundred people in the crowd, including Cresswell's wife, Mistress Cresswell, and their children, Nicholas (aged 12), Peter (aged 9) and Grace (aged 4).

Interviewed after the hanging, Constable Jasper Skinner said: 'There's some who say Henry Cresswell was innocent and that I made it all up because I don't like Catholics. But he took my pig. No doubt about it. He deserved to die and one less Papist in the world has got to be a good thing, hasn't it?'

But a close neighbour, who didn't want to be named, had a different view. 'Jasper Skinner hates Catholics. He falsely accused poor Mister Cresswell of stealing his pig and now an innocent man is dead. It is the constable who should be put on trial instead.'

After the hanging a falcon was spotted flying low over the scaffold. Some believe this is an omen of bad things to come.