

Roll: **20251105-60277**

Camera: **Canon EOS 5D Mark III**

Format: **Digital:Full Frame:33MP**

Year: **2025** Month: **November**

**Subject:** Bonfire night.

**People:**

Rahel, Joseph and Clifford.

**Notes:**

I was going out of my mind prior to bonfire night. I have organised a family bonfire night for twenty years or more at our house. Always on the fifth. With booze, fireworks, masses of food and much joy. For me one of the happiest nights of the year. Never a moveable feast, when it rained I erected a day tent and we carried on.

We maintained the ritual through two generations of children. As my son got older he took over the lighting of the fireworks and as he lost interest was succeeded by his cousins (my great nephews).

We continued when my parents died, and when my sister in law died. We continued through my years dealing with pancreatitis, a heart attack and cancer. Hardest of all we kept going when my sister died. I first remember building a bonfire, on the cobbles of Thurman Street, Hyson Green, under the direction of my sister and I was charged with defending it during the afternoon while she was school. It was 1956, I was four years old and she was six. My sister had taught me all I know about Guy Fawkes, treason and plot and she never missed a bonfire, even when suffering dreadfully from cancer.

But we carried on. My sister's daughter, took over her recipes for bonfire toffee and with the grandchildren of friends and neighbours, we soldiered on.

In the early years it was baked potatoes and vats of chilli con carne, then my Ethiopian wife got into her stride and cooked a range of meat and vegetarian dishes.

This year I knew we would have no kitchen, due to essential renovations, but I was determined not to be thwarted.

I was devastated when I realised that, quite out of the blue, my wider family, intended not to come this year. What made it worse was that they did not choose to tell me. Only by probing them individually did I learn of the turn in events. It was one of those times which came dangerously close to unhinging me entirely.

I think however that the imperative of the Bonfire, turned disaster into triumph. Keeping the unexpected rejection to myself, I continued to build a bonfire, bought two Catherine wheels and two large multi shot fire works to light up the sky. The Catherine wheels were in memory of my sister as, with the demise of jumping jacks and hand held Roman candles, they became her favourite fireworks. I improvised a curried Mongolian style hot pot, using a steel firepit mounted on a metal garden table. Burning a bag of charcoal to boil the water with vegetables, herbs, spices and bones in a large cast iron wok. I froze a leg of lamb, and as it thawed sliced it thinly. The lamb, cast into the wok, cooks in seconds while the sauce gets richer.

The fire was one of the best I'd built, not the biggest, but certainly one of the best. Despite the heavy rain on the previous day and the continuous damp in the air, it lit at the first attempt and cheating the overnight rain, it was still going in the morning. With a little poking it kept going through the next day too. I should have gotten up early, as we did in our pre-teens and cooked a cowboy breakfast on the embers before heading off to school.

The unexpected blow of family withdrawal from an annual family event taught me much about the way that those who suffer from mental illness can be so easily isolated and driven into more severe psychosis and paranoia. My wife suffers from delusional disorder and I think I already knew that I could rely on no one for help and support, but I think I had not previously realised how sudden, how total and how callous that abandonment can be.

It is very difficult for such a small family, especially where one of three is disconnected from reality, to enjoy any celebration together. Birthdays, Christmas, New Year, Sunday lunch, we struggle with them all. As my son traversed his late teenage years there was little in the way of shared interests to bring our little party together. During his four years at college, without the leavening of family or friends and the experience could feel very empty and barren. Perhaps it is my imagination, self delusion to ease my distress, a

tactic to relieve myself of sleepless nights and anxiety but, denied the cushion of entertaining, feeding and talking with the wider family and friends, this year, this bonfire night, with my son supporting both me and his mum, I believe we bonded together more tightly. I think the three of us were more harmonious than I remember us being in years past, just the three of us, making the best of things... celebrating the hideous consequences of a murderous papist plot, ironic really.

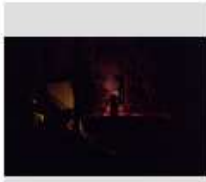
#### Dates:

Times and dates are taken from the EXIF metadata. The chronology has been checked and I believe it to be accurate.

#### Frames:

F47B0324	0511	19:23	Just one match.	105	16000	f4	1/100
F47B0336	0511	19:45	Just one match.	102	8000	f4	1/125
F47B0338	0511	19:47	Light of my life.	80	10000	f4	1/80
F47B0339	0511	19:47	Man in a jacket by a bonfire.	28	20000	f4	1/40
F47B0340	0511	19:47	Man in a jacket by a bonfire.	24	6400	f4	1/30
F47B0345	0511	19:50	Man in a gillet by a bonfire.	35	25600	f4	1/20
F47B0346	0511	19:50	Man in a gillet by a bonfire.	35	8000	f4	1/40
F47B0347	0511	19:50	Man in a gillet by a bonfire.	35	12800	f4	1/30
F47B0350	0511	19:52	Man by a bonfire.	24	800	f4	1/30
F47B0351	0511	19:53	Woman on bonfire night.	60	10000	f4	1/50
F47B0352	0511	19:54	Happiness is having your son home for bonfire night.	35	5000	f4	1/30
F47B0353	0511	19:54	Mother and son on bonfire night.	35	8000	f4	1/30
F47B0354	0511	19:54	Mother and son on bonfire night.	45	16000	f4	1/40
F47B0355	0511	19:56	Oulde chap on bonfire night.	105	5000	f4	1/100
F47B0358	0511	19:56	Oulde chap on bonfire night.	105	5000	f4	1/100
F47B0359	0511	19:57	Mother and son on bonfire night.	45	6400	f4	1/40
F47B0360	0511	19:57	Mother and son on bonfire night.	35	3200	f4	1/30
F47B0361	0511	19:57	Mother and son on bonfire night.	24	5000	f4	1/40
F47B0362	0511	19:57	Mother and son on bonfire night.	82	12800	f4	1/100
F47B0363	0511	19:57	Mother and son on bonfire night.	105	25600	f4	1/60
F47B0324	0511	19:23	Just one match.	105	16000	f4	1/100

**Just one match.**



F47B0324.jpg



F47B0336.jpg



F47B0338.jpg



F47B0339.jpg



F47B0340.jpg



F47B0345.jpg



F47B0346.jpg



F47B0347.jpg



F47B0350.jpg



F47B0351.jpg



F47B0352.jpg



F47B0353.jpg



F47B0354.jpg



F47B0355.jpg



F47B0358.jpg



F47B0359.jpg



F47B0360.jpg



F47B0361.jpg



F47B0362.jpg



F47B0363.jpg



**F47B0336 - Just one match.**



**F47B0338 - Light of my life.**





**F47B0340 - Man in a jacket by a bonfire.**



**F47B0345 - Man in a gillet by a bonfire.**





**F47B0347 - Man in a gillet by a bonfire.**



**F47B0350 - Man by a bonfire.**





**F47B0351 - Woman on bonfire night.**



**F47B0352 - Happiness is having your son home for bonfire night.**





**F47B0354 - Mother and son on bonfire night.**



**F47B0355 - Oulde chap on bonfire night.**





**F47B0360 - Mother and son on bonfire night.**



**F47B0362 - Mother and son on bonfire night.**