



THIS YEAR: A Bengal tiger tale

By Martin Evans

POLITICALLY correct councillors have sparked a major row with a bonfire ban on Guy Fawkes night.

Incredibly, Guy Fawkes himself is also excluded from their November 5 celebrations.

But there WILL be a Bengali folk tale for crowds to enthuse over at Tower Hamlets in east London.

Instead of commemorating the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 the local council has re-invented the £75,000 taxpayer-funded event to cater for the community's large Bangladeshi community.

In response to criticism, one council officer said yesterday: "We did Guy Fawkes last year."

Tory councillors described the decision as yet another case of "political correctness gone mad" and have accused the organisers of hijacking history.

### Insane

The event, which will take place in Victoria Park, Hackney, on Sunday evening, is based on an ancient Bengali folk tale and will feature fireworks, singing and dancing. But the traditional Guy, burning on top of a large bonfire will be nowhere to be seen.

John Midgley, spokesman for the Campaign Against Political Correctness, said yesterday: "It is almost too insane for words. There is a time and place for everything and November the Fifth is Bonfire Night."

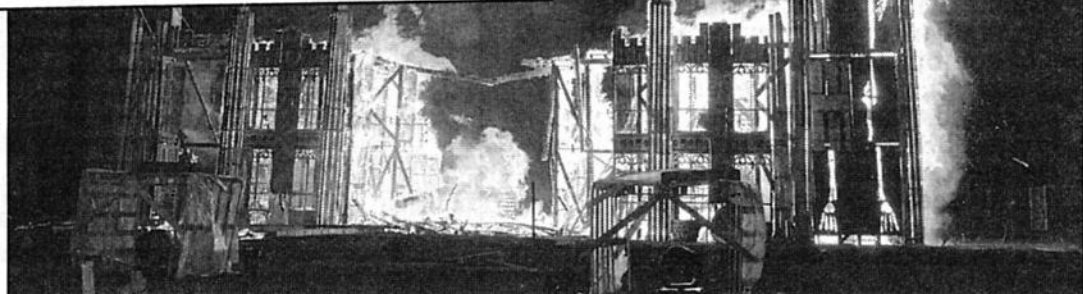
He added: "It's time for common sense and for people to tell bureaucrats that politically correct actions such as this undermine our historic occasions and harm community relations."

Local Tory councillor Tim Archer added: "Bonfire Night is a celebration of our rich and proud history and it would appear it's being airbrushed out with some sort of attempt to be politically correct."

Last year a huge crowd flocked to the council's Bonfire Night celebrations which featured the burning of a huge model of Parliament, marking the 400th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot.

But this year the council said

# Council's £75,000 bonfire night has NO Guy Fawkes and NO bonfire... but DOES have a Bengali folk tale



**LAST YEAR** This was how they remembered Guy Fawkes at Tower Hamlets in 2005 – by burning a model of Parliament in a fireworks display

it wanted the event to be "more inclusive". In a statement Tower Hamlets council denied that it was attempting to airbrush British history.

"This differentiates our celebrations from other boroughs and our events are proving to be extremely popular," the statement said.

"Our sole aim is to stage an exciting event on the traditional Fireworks Night that will attract the interest of as many

people as possible. Last year's event, which had a Guy Fawkes theme, and involved burning down a pretend Houses of Parliament attracted 23,000 people."

A spokesman for the council explained that this year's celebrations were based on a Bengali folk tale entitled the Emperor and the Tiger.

It will tell the story of a greedy Moghul leader who forced his people to pay higher

taxes. A giant mock tiger will pace up and down a catwalk, while the backdrop will feature a pyrotechnic display.

The spokesman went on: "The dramatic increasing numbers of people attending our traditional event indicates this is a popular approach – as do the many welcoming emails we have received, responding to the publicity for this event."

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# Tradition up in smoke

**T**HE Britain-hating multiculturalists who infest local government have taken their campaign to a new level in East London by spending thousands on a Bengali festival in place of Bonfire Night. Subsidising minority cultures is controversial enough but seeking to wipe out a British tradition altogether is an outrage.