

Historical context

- 1597** King James VI of Scotland publishes a book called '*Daemonologie*' which is all about witches and witchcraft. He condemns witchcraft and says that it goes against the teachings of the Christian church,
- 1603** King James VI inherits the English throne and becomes James I of England. He believes he is descended from Banquo. He has a double coronation in Scone (Scotland) and Westminster (England). This makes him king of Great Britain, Ireland and France.
- The Lord Chamberlain's Men, a group of actors which included Shakespeare, is appointed King James I's official troupe of players and are renamed 'The King's Men.' They are given scarlet cloth for cloaks and are invited to join his coronation procession.
- 1605** A plan to kill King James I, commonly known as the Gunpowder Plot, was discovered and stopped. A group of Catholic conspirators led by Robert Catesby planned to blow up the Houses of Parliament, while King James I was there, using 36 barrels of gunpowder. The conspirators were either shot dead or tried and executed.
- 1606** Shakespeare writes *Macbeth*. He was influenced by events of the Gunpowder plot and King James I's interest in witchcraft. These together with King James I's claim to be descended from Banquo resulted in a play full of greed, power and ambition set in the King's native Scotland.

[Click here](#) for a video from our collection's team, talking through some of the historical texts and items that may have been inspirations for Shakespeare when he was writing *Macbeth*.

