

= John and Christopher Wright =

John (Jack) Wright (January 1568 ? 8 November 1605) , and Christopher (Kit) Wright (1570 ? ? 8 November 1605) , were members of the group of provincial English Catholics who planned the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605 , a conspiracy to assassinate King James I by blowing up the House of Lords . Their sister married another plotter , Thomas Percy . Educated at the same school in York , the Wrights had early links with Guy Fawkes , the man left in charge of the explosives stored in the undercroft beneath the House of Lords . As known recusants the brothers were on several occasions arrested for reasons of national security . Both were also members of the Earl of Essex 's rebellion of 1601 .

John was one of the first men to join the conspiracy , which was led by Robert Catesby . Christopher joined in March 1605 . At about midnight on 4 November Fawkes was discovered and arrested , following which John , Christopher and the rest of the conspirators travelled across the Midlands , attempting to gain support for a popular uprising . Eventually the group opted to wait for the authorities at Holbeche House , on the border of Staffordshire . On 8 November the Sheriff of Worcester arrived with a large group of armed men , and both brothers were killed in the ensuing firefight .

= = Family and life before 1604 = =

John and Christopher Wright were born to Robert Wright and his second wife , Ursula Rudston , daughter of Nicholas and Jane Rudston of Hayton . John was baptised at Welwick in Yorkshire , on 16 January 1568 , and Christopher was born in 1570 . Their sister , Martha , married Thomas Percy in 1591 .

The brothers were pupils at St Peter 's School in York , along with Guy Fawkes , whose name has become synonymous with the Gunpowder Plot . Although outwardly conformist , the school 's headmaster John Pulleine came from a notable family of Yorkshire recusants , and his predecessor at St Peter 's had spent 20 years in prison for his recusancy . Three Catholic priests , Oswald Tesimond , Edward Oldcorn and Robert Middleton , were also educated at St Peter 's . John and Christopher were both married , to Dorothy and Margaret respectively . John had a daughter , born some time in the late 1590s .

As a precautionary measure , in 1596 they were each arrested during Queen Elizabeth I 's illness . They were incarcerated at the White Lyon prison in 1601 for their involvement in the Earl of Essex 's rebellion . Both were skilled swordsmen , and John was renowned for his courage . The Jesuit priest Oswald Tesimond wrote that he possessed a " good physique and sound constitution . Rather on the tall side , his features were pleasing . He was somewhat taciturn in manner , but very loyal to his friends , even if his friends were few " . Christopher 's appearance was slightly different from that of his brother , " not like him in face , as being fatter and a lighter coloured hair and taller of person " . According to Father John Gerard , John 's involvement with Essex coincided with his conversion to Catholicism . Gerard also noted that John 's household , Twigmoor Hall in Lincolnshire , was a place where " he had Priests come often , both for his spiritual comfort and their own in corporal helps " , although the government 's description , " a Popish college for traitors " , was somewhat less favourable . Following his conversion John became " a man of exemplary life " . Two years later , as the queen 's health waned , a nervous government ensured that John and Christopher were again imprisoned , the English antiquarian William Camden describing them as men " hunger @-@ starved for innovation " . Christopher may have travelled to Spain in 1603 using the alias Anthony Dutton , seeking Spanish support for English Catholics , although biographer Mark Nicholls mentions that Dutton 's role may have been attributed to Christopher by Fawkes and Thomas Wintour , held in the Tower of London after the failure of the plot .

= = Gunpowder Plot = =

Early in 1604 Robert Catesby , a Catholic convert who had lost patience with King James I 's lack of

toleration of Catholics , invited his cousin Thomas Wintour to a meeting at which John was also present . Catesby proposed to blow up " the Parliament House with gunpowder " , killing the king and his government , as in " that place , have they done us all the mischief " . Catesby had not then given up hope on foreign help , and so he sent Wintour to the continent to meet with the Constable of Castille . Wintour also met with Welsh spy Hugh Owen , who introduced him to Guy Fawkes , a man with whose name Catesby was familiar . A fifth conspirator , Thomas Percy , joined them several weeks later . Percy was related to the Wright family by marriage , having wed John 's sister , Martha . The group met on 20 May 1604 at the Duck and Drake inn , in the fashionable Strand district of London . After the meeting they swore an oath of secrecy on a prayer book and celebrated Mass in another room with Father John Gerard , who was ignorant of their purpose .

From these early meetings , according to biographer Mark Nicholls , John exhibited " little sign of doubt or scruple thereafter " . He remained close to the heart of the conspiracy , moving his family to Lapworth in Warwickshire , and stabling horses there . By March 1605 Christopher had joined the conspiracy as well , but in October that year , as the plan was nearing its culmination , its existence was revealed to the authorities by an anonymous letter delivered to William Parker , 4th Baron Monteagle , warning him to stay away from Parliament . Uncertain of its meaning Monteagle delivered the letter to the English Secretary of State , Robert Cecil , 1st Earl of Salisbury . Monteagle 's servant was closely related to Christopher 's wife , Margaret , and thus the plotters soon became aware of its existence . Catesby , by then at White Webbs near Enfield Chase with the Wright brothers , decided that the letter did not constitute a sufficiently serious threat to the scheme , and he decided to forge ahead . On 4 November Percy visited his patron , Henry Percy , 9th Earl of Northumberland , to see if he could discern what rumours surrounded the letter . He returned to London and assured John , Thomas Wintour and Robert Keyes that they had nothing to be concerned about . That same evening John probably set off for the Midlands with Catesby and his servant Thomas Bates , while the others moved into their positions , ready for the planned explosion the following day . At about midnight the authorities made a search of the House of Lords , and in the chamber 's undercroft they discovered and arrested Fawkes , who was guarding the gunpowder the conspirators had placed there .

As news of Fawkes 's capture spread , particularly through the great houses of the Strand , Christopher deduced what had occurred and went to Thomas Wintour at the Duck and Drake inn , exclaiming " the matter is discovered " . Wintour ordered him to verify the news , and on confirming that the government were seeking Thomas Percy (for whom Fawkes , using the alias " John Johnson " , claimed to be working) , ordered him to alert Percy . Christopher and Percy left London together , heading for Dunstable .

With the group mostly reintegrated , they spent the next two days moving across Warwickshire and Worcestershire , attempting to drum up support for a rebellion that as time passed became ever more unlikely . On 6 November , the same day they were helping to raid Warwick Castle for supplies , the brothers were identified by the Lord Chief Justice Sir John Popham as suspects . This prompted the authorities to issue a public proclamation on 7 November naming them and several of their fellow conspirators as wanted men . The group tried unsuccessfully to recruit more rebels at Hewell Grange , but on 7 November , tired and desperate , they decided to make their stand at Holbeche House , on the border of Staffordshire . On the arrival the following morning of the Sheriff of Worcester and his company of men , a gun battle broke out and Catesby , Percy , and both Wright brothers were shot . With medical attention they might have survived , but " the baser sort " among the sheriff 's men hurriedly stripped them of their clothes (Christopher 's boots were pulled off to reach his silk stockings) , and left them to die .