

= John Grant (Gunpowder Plot) =

John Grant (c . 1570 ? 30 January 1606) was a member of the failed Gunpowder Plot , a conspiracy to replace the Protestant King James I of England with a Catholic monarch . Grant was born around 1570 , and lived at Norbrook in Warwickshire . He married the sister of another plotter , Thomas Wintour . Grant was enlisted by Robert Catesby , a religious zealot who had grown so impatient with James 's lack of toleration for Catholics that he planned to kill him , by blowing up the House of Lords with gunpowder . Grant 's role in the conspiracy was to provide supplies for a planned Midlands uprising , during which James 's daughter , Princess Elizabeth , would be captured . However , on the eve of the planned explosion , Guy Fawkes was discovered guarding the explosives the plotters had positioned in the undercroft beneath the House of Lords , and arrested .

As the government searched for Fawkes 's accomplices , Grant and the others engaged in a futile mission for support for the uprising . They stole horses from Warwick Castle , and further supplies from Hewell Grange , before stopping at Holbeche House . The plotters laid in front of the fire some of the gunpowder they had collected , to dry out , but a stray spark ignited the powder , and in the resultant conflagration Grant was blinded . Government forces besieged the house , and he was captured and taken to London .

At his arraignment in January 1606 Grant pleaded not guilty to high treason , but he was nevertheless sentenced to be hanged , drawn and quartered , and was executed three days later , on 30 January .

= = Background = =

Born some time around 1570 , John Grant lived at Norbrook , near Snitterfield in Warwickshire . He was married to Thomas Wintour 's sister , Dorothy , with a son , Wintour Grant . He is described by author Antonia Fraser as a melancholy individual , but also an intellectual who studied Latin and other languages . He was a resolute character , as the pursuivants who searched his home for Catholic priests were no doubt aware ; he was so unwelcoming to them that they eventually shied away from Norbrook . Grant was also involved in the Essex Rebellion against Elizabeth I , as were several of the men with whom he became better acquainted through what became known as the Gunpowder Plot .

= = Plot = =

English Catholics hoped that the years of persecution they had suffered during Elizabeth 's reign would end when James I came to the throne , as his attitude appeared moderate , even tolerant towards Catholics . In Robert Catesby 's view however , James had reneged on his promises , and he quickly lost patience with the new dynasty . He therefore planned to kill James by blowing up the House of Lords with gunpowder , and inciting a popular revolt during which a Catholic monarch would be restored to the throne .

Catesby enlisted the help of six fellow Catholics , and by 25 March 1605 he had recruited three others : Robert Wintour , Christopher Wright , and Grant . Grant had received a letter from Catesby inviting him to a meeting that took place in Oxford at the Catherine Wheel inn , where he and Robert Wintour swore an oath after which they were told of the plan . Grant 's role in the uprising centred on his house at Norbrook , ideally located in the English Midlands close to Warwick and Stratford , and to Catesby 's childhood home at Lapworth (then owned by John Wright) . In summer 1605 Grant likely stored weapons and ammunition at Norbrook , but he was also to take charge of the provision of rare war horses from the nearby Warwick Castle .

Concern over the plague had delayed Parliament 's opening from February , to October 1605 , and the government later claimed that by December 1604 the plotters were busily digging a tunnel beneath Parliament . No evidence exists to substantiate this claim , and no trace of a tunnel was ever found , but perhaps because of the change of dates Grant seems not to have been involved in

the endeavour , which was stopped when the tenancy to the undercroft beneath the House of Lords became available . By 20 July the explosives were in position , but the opening of Parliament was again prorogued , this time until 5 November 1605 . As Catesby added three more to the conspiracy , the last few details were worked out ; Fawkes was to light the fuse that would set off the explosion , and then escape to the continent , while the others would incite the Midlands uprising , and capture James 's daughter , Princess Elizabeth . Thus , as the plot moved closer to fruition , on Monday 4 November Grant and a friend were to be found in Dunchurch at the Red Lion inn , with the newly recruited Everard Digby and his " hunting party " . The group attended a Mass the next morning , before moving on .

= = Failure = =

Tipped off by an anonymous letter to William Parker , 4th Baron Monteagle , late on Monday night the authorities had made a search of Parliament . There they had discovered Fawkes guarding the gunpowder the plotters had placed in the undercroft beneath the House of Lords . Catesby and the others , en route to the Midlands , had been alerted to his arrest by those conspirators who had since fled London , and together had rode to Dunchurch to meet Digby and his party .

By Wednesday 6 November the government was busy searching for Fawkes ' accomplices , and towards the end of the day Grant 's name appeared on the list of suspects drawn up by the Lord Chief Justice . However , confirmation of his status as a fugitive would not arrive until the next day , when provoked by their raid for supplies on Warwick Castle , the government issued a public proclamation naming Percy , Catesby , Rookwood , Thomas Wintour and both Wright brothers as wanted men . On the same proclamation Grant was misidentified as Edward Grant , and Catesby 's servant , Thomas Bates , was probably also misnamed as Robert Ashfield . From Warwick they rode to Grant 's home at Norbrook , collecting muskets , calivers and ammunition that he had stored there . Then they continued west through Snitterfield toward Alcester , before stopping at Huddington at about 2 : 00 pm that afternoon . Early the next morning they attended a Mass conducted by Father Nicholas Hart , who also heard their confessions ? a sign that in Fraser 's opinion demonstrates that none of them thought they had long to live .

Riding through pouring rain , the fugitives helped themselves to arms , ammunition and money from the vacant home of Lord Windsor at Hewell Grange . Any hopes they harboured of a larger uprising were dashed by the locals , who on hearing that the party stood for " God and Country " , replied that they were for " King James as well as God and Country " . The group finally reached Holbeche House , on the border of Staffordshire , at about 10 : 00 pm . Tired and desperate they spread in front of the fire some of the now @-@ soaked gunpowder taken from Hewell Grange , to dry out . An ember from the fire landed on the powder , and the resultant flames engulfed Catesby , Rookwood , Grant and another man .

Grant was blinded by the conflagration , his eyes " burnt out " . Some of the plotters disappeared into the night , but Grant stayed with Catesby , Thomas Wintour , Rookwood , the Wright brothers and Percy . With the arrival of the Sheriff of Worcester and his company early on 8 November , the house was besieged . Catesby and Percy were killed , as were both Wright brothers . Wintour and Rookwood were each wounded and were easily captured , as was Grant .

= = Trial and execution = =

Grant and the survivors were taken first to Worcester in the custody of the Sheriff , and then to the Tower of London . At their arraignment on 27 January 1606 all except Digby pleaded " Not Guilty " , but the outcome was never in doubt ; they were all found guilty of high treason , and sentenced to be hanged , drawn and quartered .

The first executions were scheduled for Thursday 30 January 1606 . Along with Digby and Robert Wintour (Bates was brought separately , from the Gatehouse Prison) , Grant was strapped to a wattled hurdle and dragged through the streets of London to St Paul 's churchyard , by St.Paul 's Cathedral . Digby was the first to ascend the scaffold , and before he was executed gave a short

speech . Wintour followed , saying little . Grant was next . At his trial , when asked why a death sentence should not be pronounced against him , he had replied that he was " guilty of a conspiracy intended , but never effected . " Similarly , when faced with the executioner 's halter he refused to confess ? the only one of the condemned to do so . He was led quietly up the ladder and crossed himself , before being hanged and then subjected to the latter part of his sentence . The other four plotters were executed the following day , in Old Palace Yard .