

## The plotters gather

[Richard Lintern]

The gunpowder plotters were a group of young Catholic gentlemen who felt wronged by the laws of Protestant England and angered by the way the state had turned against them.

At the time Catholics who didn't attend Protestant services were fined or had lands taken away.

Robert Catesby, the ringleader of the group, was a fervent Catholic from Northamptonshire. A man of great charm and charisma, he had already taken part in another failed plot against Elizabeth I's government in 1601. By 1604 Catesby believed blowing up the House of Lords could return England to Catholicism. Now he would need men he could trust to make it possible.

He first included his friend John Wright, a strong and silent man who liked action and was noted for his swordsmanship. He had already taken part in the 1601 rebellion with Catesby.

Robert also enlisted John's brother-in-law Thomas Percy who would be their man on the inside. Thomas enjoyed the patronage of his powerful cousin the Earl of Northumberland and could come and go at court as he pleased.

The next member was Robert's cousin, Thomas Wintour. He was a well-educated soldier experienced in secret diplomacy. He would smooth the way in Europe for their new regime.

Captain Guido Fawkes provided the final piece of the puzzle. A former school friend of Jack Wright, he was an explosives expert and would have a crucial role in preparing the gunpowder.

Together these five men would plan mass murder to overthrow a regime they considered to be heretical and unjust.