

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 13 May 1587 from Sir Francis Walsingham to Lord Burghley concerning the Queen's grant to Oxford of the escheated lands of Edward Jones, executed for his part in the Babington plot of 1586. For Lord Burghley's reply, see TNA SP 12/201/16, f. 28.

According to the *ODNB*, 'The significance of the Babington plot lay not in the capture and punishment of fourteen inept and unfortunate conspirators, but in the death of Mary Stewart, whose fate was bound up with theirs'.

The *ODNB* identifies the original nine Babington conspirators as:

* Anthony Babington (1561–1586), eldest son of Henry Babington of Dethick by his second wife, Mary Darcy, daughter of George (d.1558), Lord Darcy, and granddaughter of Thomas, Lord Darcy, who was beheaded in 1537 for his role in the Pilgrimage of Grace.

* John Ballard (d.1586), a Catholic priest.

* John Savage (d.1586).

* Thomas Salisbury (1561x4–1586) of the Salisbury family of Lleweni, Denbighshire, a ward of the Earl of Leicester.

* Edward Abington (c.1553–1586), eldest son of John Abington of Hindlip, Worcestershire, cofferer to Queen Elizabeth, by Catherine Wykes, daughter of John Wykes.

* Chidiock Tichborne (c.1558–1586), son of Peter Tichborne by Elizabeth Middleton, daughter of Henry Middleton.

* Charles Tilney (1561–1586), gentleman pensioner, son of Philip Tilney of Shelley Hall, Suffolk, by Anne Framlingham, the daughter of Francis Framlingham of Crowshall, Debenham. Charles Tilney's paternal grandfather, Frederick Tilney (d.1541) was a first cousin of Edmund Tilney 1535/6–1610), Master of the Revels.

* Edward Windsor, brother of Henry Windsor (1562-1605), 5th Baron Windsor. Edward Windsor was a younger son of Oxford's half sister, Katherine de Vere (1538-1600), and her husband, Edward Windsor (1532?-1575), 3rd Baron Windsor. According to the *ODNB*, 'He soon disappeared from the meetings of the plotters and was not present at the final trial'.

* Robert Barnewell, likely a member of the Irish pale family of Barnewell.

According to the *ODNB*, 'five others joined the plot a little later':

* Edward Jones of Plas Cadwgan, Denbighshire, the son of Edward Jones, who was tailor to Queen Mary, Master of the Wardrobe to Queen Elizabeth, a protégé of the Earl of Leicester, and Sheriff of Denbighshire in 1576.

* Henry Donne, Clerk of the First Fruits, likely an older relative of the poet, John Donne.

* Robert Gage of Surrey.

* John Travers, a member of a Lancashire family.

* John Charnock, a member of a Lancashire family.

* Sir Thomas Gerard, likely a friend of Thomas Gerard of Bryn, who was the father of the Jesuit, John Gerard, and an MP for Lancashire in 1563.

According to the *ODNB*:

Except for Savage, all those plotters about whom anything is known had links to the royal court. This was not a provincial conspiracy, but rather one hatched in London, mainly by young Catholic courtiers.

* Another conspirator, caught up in the final days for hiding Babington, was Jerome Bellamy.

Also involved in the conspiracy was Gilbert Gifford (1560–1590), the son of a Catholic recusant family of Chillington, Staffordshire. The chief conspirators considered him one of themselves, but he was in reality a government spy, and through him, according to the *ODNB*, ‘the government was thus kept fully informed of the entire progress of the plot, usually before the conspirators themselves’.

Altogether, fourteen conspirators were executed, the first seven, including Babington, on 20 September 1586, while another seven were executed the following day.

My very good Lord, I have acquainted her Majesty with the contents of my Lord of Oxford's late letter, whom I found willing to pass his suit upon condition that he shall assure unto Jones his widow an annuity of thirty pounds during her life, to go out either of those(?) lands or of some other lands of his Lordship's that she shall like of. And that where her Majesty meant the grant should have passed only to my Lord and to th' heirs of him and my Lady, your daughter only, his Lordship desiring to have the same to his heirs general in respect of his advantage in the sale, shall assure to the Crown in remainder so much of some other of his lands. Wherefore it may please your Lordship to cause the book to be drawn accordingly. And so I most humbly take my leave at Nonsuch the 13th of May 1587.

Your Lordship's to command,
Francis Walsingham

Addressed: To the right honourable my very good Lord, the Lord Treasurer of England

Endorsed: 13 May 1587, Mr Secretary to my Lord, Earl of Oxford's grants(?)