

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 157 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=157>)

From: Bess of Hardwick (Chatsworth House, Derbyshire);

To: Henry Foljambe;

Date: June [1568?]

Summary: Bess (countess of Shrewsbury) writes to one Henry Foljambe, concerning a recently widowed woman, Elizabeth Flint, who has asked that her brother Roland, currently in Bess's employment, be sent to her for 'urgent cause to employ him otherwise'. Bess asks Foljambe to favour the woman's cause.

Archive: The National Archives, State Papers Domestic, Supplementary, 46/24, ff 35r-36v

Delivery status: from Bess, sent

Letter features: Seal intact - no. Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - tuck and fold

Hands: unknown scribe | archivist | Bess of Hardwick |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 157: Bess of Hardwick

Born Elizabeth Hardwick (in c.1521/2, d. 13 February 1608), the woman known to posterity as Bess of Hardwick married four times during her life, as a result of which her name changed from Hardwick to Barlow (or Barley), Cavendish, St Loe and then finally (when she was countess of Shrewsbury and then dowager countess) Talbot. As one of the five children of John Hardwick (1495-1528) of Hardwick, Derbyshire, and his first wife, Elizabeth (née Leake), Bess had three sisters (Mary, Jane and Alice) and one brother (James). The Hardwicks were established Derbyshire gentry who had inherited a modest manor house and c.400 acres in and around Hardwick. But when John died in 1528, and their lands were seized by the crown, Bess faced hardship. Bess's mother quickly remarried but her new husband, Ralph Leche of Chatsworth, Derbyshire, brought little land or money to the marriage, and three more daughters were born (Bess's half-sisters Elizabeth, Jane and Margaret). Little else is known of Bess's childhood but, while still young, she was married for the first time, to Robert Barlow (or Barley) of Barlow, Derbyshire, sometime in or before 1543. Barlow died in 1544 and Bess received a small inheritance. In 1547 she married the twice-widowed Sir William Cavendish, treasurer of the king's chamber. Bess and Cavendish had eight children, six of whom survived: Frances (1548), Henry (1550), William (1551, from whom the dukes of Devonshire are descended), Charles (1553, from whom the dukes of Newcastle and Portland are descended), Elizabeth (1554) and Mary (1556). Probably due to a mixture of affection and shared social ambition, Bess's second marriage was happy and fortuitous. She was now moving in courtly circles and experiencing (for the first time) considerable wealth. In 1549 Cavendish and Bess bought the estate of Chatsworth, which was held jointly in both their names and which he and then Bess, following Cavendish's death in 1557, ambitiously rebuilt. Soon after her second husband's death, and sometime before Elizabeth I's accession (in 1558), Bess married Sir William St Loe, a wealthy widower of ancient noble pedigree. St Loe was captain of the guard to the young queen and in addition to further improving Bess's finances, he also brought her into the queen's inner circle and she served briefly as a gentlewoman of the queen's privy chamber (in 1559). The marriage seems to have not been without affection; however, the two would have spent most of it apart - he serving the queen in London and Bess mostly at Chatsworth. Upon St Loe's death (probably in 1565), Bess inherited most of the estate. In 1567 Bess married for a final time, to George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, one of the richest and most powerful men in England. To consolidate the union of their fortunes, the couple had Bess's eldest son, Henry, marry Shrewsbury's daughter (from his previous marriage), and Shrewsbury's eldest son, Gilbert (later the seventh earl), marry Bess's daughter, Mary. Also around this time, Shrewsbury was appointed to be the keeper of Mary Queen of Scots (from 1568-84). At first, relations between Bess and the Catholic Scottish queen seem to have been amicable; however, relations deteriorated all around as Bess's marriage to Shrewsbury broke down in the 1580s. An infamously nasty and highly public legal battle over estates ensued and finally the courts resolved that Shrewsbury provide Bess with a sizeable income from 1587 onwards (Shrewsbury died in 1590). In 1582, Bess took charge of the upbringing of her orphaned granddaughter, Arbella Stuart (1575-1615), claimant to the English

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and Scottish crowns. In 1587, Bess undertook her remarkable building works at Hardwick: the house now known as Hardwick Old Hall was complete by 1591; next to it, the extraordinary building now known as Hardwick New Hall was complete by 1599 and is one of the greatest architectural ventures of Elizabethan England. It was at Hardwick that Bess spent most of the remainder of her life, much of it devoted to caring for and managing Arbella, who came to loathe her existence in Derbyshire and devised several bizarre plans for her escape (to Bess's great distress). Bess also quarrelled with her eldest son, Henry, and disinherited both him and Arbella in her will. She left most of her estate to her beloved and faithful son, William Cavendish, who continued her great dynasty into the seventeenth century.

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People Associated with Letter 157: Henry Foljambe

Little is known of Henry Foljambe other than that the Foljambes seem to have been a Derbyshire family and friends of Bess.

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Other letters associated with Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

- 15 Mar [1550s?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=200>)
- 31 Mar [1550s?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=198>)
- 13 Apr [c.1550] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=13>)
- 14 Nov [1552] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=99>)
- 13 Jan [c.1560] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=47>)
- 4 Sep [1560?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=59>)
- 12 Oct [c.1560] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=60>)
- 24 Oct [c.1560] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=61>)
- 18 May 1562 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=55>)
- 20 Nov [1565?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=17>)
- 8 Dec [c.1565] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=28>)
- 26 Feb [1566?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=18>)
- 28 Jun [1568?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=64>)
- [1570s?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=210>)
- [1570] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=178>)
- 28 Jul 1570 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=25>)
- 31 Aug 1570 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=170>)
- 21 Sep 1571 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=26>)
- [1577] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=182>)
- 2 Aug 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=197>)
- 23 Sep 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=121>)
- 22 Jun 1579 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=189>)
- 15 Jul 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=175>)
- 8 Apr 1594 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=236>)
- 8 May 1594 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=102>)

Normalised view of Letter 157

To my very Lovinge cosin harry ffoliambe of Derrick Esquier

Good cosin ffoliambe. I am geven to vnderstand that this Whytson weeke was apointed for determeninge an order towchinge Elizsabeth fflint wedow/ for that her husband lately dyed intestate./ at which conclusy[on] because shee thinkes yt behoves her to have my servant Rolland her brother/ and vpon vrg[ent] cause to ymploy him otherwyse, Let me intreat you to defer the matter vntill Trynety Sunday: as also to vse very frendly consideracion towards the wedowe/ and the rather for that I wilbe loathe to see her wrongged/ wherin seing the case so standes, as your frendship and well handling the matter may stryke the stroake/. I nothing rest in doubte of your forwardnes and favor to her cause/ the which I shall take in very tha[n]kful[l] sorte and not be found vnmyndfull ... may do you plasure/ with m[y] very hartly commendacions I bid ... farewell. Chatsworthe the ... of Iune/

Your Lovinge cosin

EShrousbury

Diplomatic view of Letter 157

[Address Leaf]

[Address Leaf: Notes]

Eliz. [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To my very Lovinge
cosin harry ffoliambe
of Derrick Esquier

[Overleaf]

[Overleaf: Notes]

36 [Foliation, hand: archivist]

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

35 [Foliation, hand: archivist]

Good cosin ffoliambe. I am geven to vnd^r stand that this
Whytson weeke was apointed for determeninge an order
towchinge Elizabeth fflint wedow/ for that her
husband lately dyed intestate./ at w^{ch} conclusy...
becawse shee thinkes yt behoves her to have my
servant Rolland her broth^r / and vpon vrg...
cause to ymploy him otherwyse, Let me intreat
you to defer the matter vntill Trynety
Sunday: as also to vse very frendly *consideracion*
towards the wedowe/ and the rather for that I
wilbe loathe to see her wronged/ wherin
seing the case so standes, as yo^r frendship
and well handling the matter may stryke the
stroake/. I nothing rest in doubte of y^r ~~forw~~
forwardnes and favor to her cause/ the
w^{ch} I shall take in very tha...kful...
sorte and not be found vnmyndfull ...
may do you plasure/ wth m...
very hartly *commendacions* I bid ...
farewell. Chatsworthe the ...

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of Iune/

Yo^r Lovinge cosin

EShrousbury

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