

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 022 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=022>)

From: William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire (London, Greater London);

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: [c. 1600]

Summary: William Cavendish writes to his mother, Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury), about 'Basford's matter'; a visit to the Master of the Pells, who is ill; and Lady Arbella (Stuart), Bess's grand-daughter, being at Edmonton.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (24)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

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

Hands: William Cavendish | archivist |

Version: 1.0

Copyright Information

All material is made available free of charge for individual, non-commercial use only. The copyright and other intellectual property rights in the transcribed letter text, metadata about the letters and the design of the letter display are owned by the University of Glasgow.

You are permitted to access, print and download letters from this site on the following conditions:

- use of all material on this site is for information and for non-commercial or your own personal use only; any copies of these pages saved to disk or to any other storage medium may only be used for subsequent viewing purposes or to print extracts for non-commercial or your own personal use.
- the content must not be modified in any way.
- any use of the material for a permitted purpose must be accompanied by a full source citation.

No part of this site may be reproduced or stored in any other web site or included in any public or private electronic retrieval system or service without the University of Glasgow's prior written permission. Commercial exploitation of the transcribed letters, including use by radio or television programme makers and examination boards, is prohibited without licence from the University of Glasgow.

Further information on copyright and citation can be found at:- (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/background.jsp?id=171>)

People Associated with Letter 022: William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire

William Cavendish, first earl of Devonshire (1551-1626), was the second son of Bess and her second husband, Sir William Cavendish (1508-1557). Upon Bess's marriage to George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, William and his brother Charles (also Cavendish) were promised sums when they turned twenty-one - a promise that would later be revisited as a major source of disagreement between Shrewsbury and Bess. William married Anne Keighley in 1581, with whom he had three sons and three daughters. During the feud between Bess and Shrewsbury in the 1580s, William sided clearly with his mother and on one occasion stood armed and ready to defend Chatsworth from one of Shrewsbury's raids. Especially in contrast to her great disappointment with her eldest son, Henry Cavendish, Bess greatly favoured William and he inherited most of her property and land when she died on 13 February 1608. William gained prominence following the accession of James I (in 1603) and was elevated to the peerage as Baron Cavendish of Hardwick in 1605, and then earl of Devonshire in 1618. He managed his money and lands very well and left his son, also William, a great inheritance.

Other letters associated with William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire:

31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=227>)

31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)

9 August 1593 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=108>)

12 November 1600 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=20>)

4 July 1604 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=21>)

23 April 1605 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=23>)

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

People Associated with Letter 022: 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

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

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.

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Other letters associated with London, Greater London

- 14 Nov [1552] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=99>)
- 25 Feb 1558 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=112>)
- 24 Oct [c.1560] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=61>)
- 4 Nov 1561 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=54>)
- 14 Dec [1564] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=50>)
- [23?] Jan 1569 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=164>)
- 28 Jul 1570 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=25>)
- 31 Aug 1570 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=170>)
- 21 Sep 1571 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=26>)
- 13 Oct 1571 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=225>)
- 3 Feb 1574 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=27>)
- 9 Jul 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=191>)
- 21 May 1591 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=215>)
- 12 Nov 1600 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=20>)
- 4 Jul 1604 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=21>)
- 23 Apr 1605 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=23>)

Normalised view of Letter 022

To my Lady./

My bounden dewtie &c./ I attended this morning on my Lord Treasurer told him yat hir Majestie had sent to ye Iudges & to ye lord of Shrewsbury towching Basford; his Lordship sayd he was very glad of yat./ The Iudges haue made stay for Basfordes matter. They think yt very strang[e] yat it hath bene so earnestly called on now yat they see my lord's owne lettre and hir Majesties order./ I was this morning with ye master of ye Pelles, he was in his bed, taketh good rest his loosnes is stayd; he in good temper very dry but no stomack to any meate; he asked sondry questions of your Ladyship & of your causes which I declared to him./ My lady Arbella & ye rest of your Ladyships at Edmonton are very well. this day I hard from thence./ And thus with my daily prayer &c I most humbly ceass./ This tuesday.

Your Ladyshyps most humble & obedient sonne

W. Cauendysshe

Diplomatic view of Letter 022

[Address Leaf]

[Address Leaf: Notes]

Lady Arbella at Edmonton [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To my Lady./

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(24) [Item number, hand: archivist]

49 [Old foliation/item number, hand: archivist]

53 [Old foliation/item number, hand: archivist]

My bounden dewtie &c./ I attended this morning on my Lo. Tr.^r told him y^t hir Ma.^{tie} had sent to y^e Iudges & to ye lord of Shr. towching Basford; his Lo.^p sayd he was very glad of y^t ./ The Iudges haue made stay for Basfordes matter. They think yt very strang... y^t it is hath bene so earnestly called on ~ se~~n~~ now y^t they see my lo. owne *lettre* and hir Ma.^{tie} order./ I was this morning wth y^e m^r of ye Pelles, he was in his bed, taketh ñee good rest his loosnes ^{^is^} stayd; he in good temper very dry but no stomack to any ~ meate; he asked sondry questions of yo^r La.^p & of yo^r causes w^{ch} I declared to him./ My la. Arbella & y^e rest of yo^r La.^{ps} at Edmonton are very well. this day I hard from thence./ And thus wth my dayly prayer &c

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

I most humbly ceass./ This
tuesday.

Yo^r Ladyshyps
§

[significant space]
most humble
& obedient sonne

W. Cauendysshe

Version: 1.0