

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 041 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=041>)

From: Elizabeth Stuart, countess of Lennox (née Cavendish);

To: Bess of Hardwick (Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire);

Date: [1574?]

Summary: Elizabeth Cavendish (later countess of Lennox) writes to her mother, Bess (countess of Shrewsbury), to thank her for lending her a litter for a journey.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (50)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: seal over floss, red wax, embossed with the Lennox Stuart arms Floss, goldish-ochre (close to Michel 9-5-7, 9-0-8, 9-0-5 and 5-16-8) Letter packet - accordion

Hands: Elizabeth Stuart, countess of Lennox | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 041: Elizabeth Stuart, countess of Lennox (née Cavendish)

Elizabeth Stuart (née Cavendish), countess of Lennox (1554-1582), was Bess's third daughter from her second marriage to Sir William Cavendish (1508-1557). In 1574, Elizabeth married Charles Stuart, earl of Lennox (1555-1576). The couple were the parents of Arbella Stuart (1575-1615), who after their deaths was raised by her grandmother, Bess.

Other letters associated with Elizabeth Stuart, countess of Lennox (née Cavendish):

25 July [1577?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=42>)

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People Associated with Letter 041: 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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Other letters associated with Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire

- 1 Dec [c.1564] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=30>)
- 20 Jan [c.1565] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=31>)
- 3 Aug [1580s?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=205>)
- 2 Aug 1584 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=150>)
- 4 Aug 1584 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=119>)
- 18 Feb [1591?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=233>)
- 21 Sep 1592 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=163>)
- 11 Mar 1593 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=160>)
- 19 Sep 1594 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=1>)
- 20 May 1595 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=124>)
- 27 Feb 1596 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=16>)
- 11 Aug 1597 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=46>)
- 28 Feb [1598?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=187>)
- [c.1600] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=7>)
- 2 Jun 1600 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=125>)
- 6 Oct 1600 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=126>)
- 28 Apr 1601 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=127>)
- 21 Dec 1602 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=44>)
- 9 Jan 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=128>)
- 18 Jan 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=139>)
- 29 Jan 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=129>)
- 2 Feb 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=130>)
- 6 Feb 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=131>)
- 21 Feb 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=132>)
- 3 Mar 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=134>)
- 10 Mar 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=135>)

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- 18 Apr 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=140>)
- 31 Jan 1604 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=161>)
- 12 May 1604 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=63>)
- 18 Jun 1604 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=45>)
- 4 Jul 1604 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=21>)
- 16 Dec 1605 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=242>)
- 15 Jan [1606] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=180>)
- 7 Mar 1606 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=49>)
- 13 Feb 1607 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=14>)
- 25 May [1607] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=3>)
- 22 Jun 1607 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=34>)
- 27 Jun [1607] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=4>)
- 30 Nov 1607 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=179>)
- 31 Dec 1607 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=35>)

Normalised view of Letter 041

To the right honorable and my most reuerenced Lady the countes of shrewsbery att hardwick
thense

good madame hauinge no betar menes to manifiast mi thanckefolnes to youer onar bot bi thes
lines i umbli pra your ladiship to axsept them and ine theme mi reuerant thanckes for youer
onares mani ande gret faoueres and amonest the rest that it plesed youer onar to lende me
youer ladishipes litar whiche bot for that i thincke i sholde hardeli haue ataned the ende ofmi
gurni so dangouroues was the weonhores bot i beseche youer onar to be leueme that i holde
mi selfe somoche bouende to youer ladiship as i wil euar inde uar to deserue bi mi duti and
afeckesinat serues to youer ladiship thos prainge youronar maliue mani hapi yeres withehelthe
i umbli tacke leue -

your onares daftar most bondane

Elizabeth cauendishe

Diplomatic view of Letter 041

[Address Leaf]

[Address Leaf: Notes]

Eliz: D.^r of S.^r W.^m

Cavendish mar.^d to

Charles Stewart Earl

of Lenox (younger Bro.^r

to ye Father of K. James

.) Mother of y^e virtuous

Lady Arabella who was

so near to ye Crown She

fell a Sacrifice to

State Policy.

[Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

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

To the right honorable and my
most reuerenced Lady the
countes of shrewsbery
att hardwick
thense

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(50) [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

good madame hauinge no
betar menes to manifast mi thanckefolnes to youer
onar bot bi thes lines i umbli pra your ladiship to axsept
them and ine theme mi reuerant thanckes for youer
onares mani ande gret faoueres and amonest the rest that
it plesed youer onar to lende ^{^me^} youer ladishipes litar whiche
bot for that i thincke i sholde hardeli ^{^haue^} ataned the ende ofmi
gurni so dangouroues was the weonhores -----

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bot i beseche youer [*deletion*] ^{onar} to be leueme that i holde mi selfe somoche
bouende to your ladiship as i wil euar inde uar to deserue
bi mi duti and afeckesinat [*deletion*] serues to your ladiship
thos prainge youronar maliue mani hapi yeres withehelthe
i umbli tacke leue -

[significant space]

your onares daftar
most bondane

[significant space]

Elizabeth cauendishe

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