

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 054 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=054>)

From: Sir George Pierrepont (Woodhouse, Sheffield, Yorkshire);

To: Bess of Hardwick (London, Greater London);

Date: 4 November 1561

Summary: Sir George Pierrepont writes to Bess (Lady St. Loe) thanking her and her husband, William St. Loe, for the 'great pains taken with me at Holme'; further thanking Bess for her support in a suit of his; and expressing the desirability of a match between Bess's daughter Frances and his son Henry.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (69)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: papered seal, embossed Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - tuck and fold

Hands: Sir George Pierrepont | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

People Associated with Letter 054: Sir George Pierrepont

Sir George Pierrepont (d.1564) was the father-in-law of Bess's daughter, Frances (née Cavendish), following the latter's marriage to Pierrepont's son, Henry, in the 1560s.

Other letters associated with Sir George Pierrepont:

18 May 1562 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=55>)

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

People Associated with Letter 054: 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>)
- 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>)
- [c.1600] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=22>)
- 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 054

To the right worshipfull and my Singuler goode ladye my ladye Sentloo at London this be delivered./

Right wurshipffull. and my vereye good ladye/ after my hertiest maner I comende me to your good ladishepe/ even so preye yow I meye be to good Master Sentloo/ most hertelye thanckinge yow boothe/ for your great paynes taken with me at holme/ acceptinge euerye thinge (thoughe it were neuer so rewdlye handlyde) in suche gentill sorte as ye dyde which doithe and will cause me to love yow the better whuell I lyve/ yf I were abill to doo yow othere pleassure or service and the rathere because I vnderstand/ that your ladishipe hathe not forgotten my sewte to yow at your goinge awaye as speciallye to make Master Sackvile & Master attorneye my ffrendes/ in the matter betwene Master whalleye and me wherin he doithe me playne wronge (as I take it in my concyence) onelye to kepe trouble & vnquyett me/ But I trust somoche in godes helpe/ and partlye by your ladishipes good meanes/ and contynewance of your goodnes towards me/ that he shall not ouerthrowe me in my rightiose cause/ and touchinge suche cominication. as was betwene vs at holme/ yf your ladishipe. & the gentillwoman your doughtour/ lyke our boye vppon sight/ aswell. as I & my wife lyke the yonge gentillwomman/ I will not shrincke one worde. ffrone yat I said or promysed/ by the grace of gode who preserve your ladishipe/ and my master your husbände longe together/ in wealthe. healthe and prosperytie. to his pleasure. and your gentill hertes desyer/ ffrone my pover house at woodhouse. the iijth of november .1561:

by the rewde hastie hande. of your goode ladishipes. assuredlye allwaye to comaunde/

George. pierponnte. K.

Diplomatic view of Letter 054

[Address Leaf]

[Address Leaf: Notes]

S^r Geo Pierpoint Father of S^r
Henry who mar^d Frances Eldest
Daughter of S^r W^m Cavendish by
Eliz his Wife (afterwards Countess
of Shrewsbury; but at this Time
Lady Saintloe.) To w^{ch} Match this
Letter relates. 1561. [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To the right w^r shipffull
and my Singuler goode
ladye my ladye Sentloo
at London this be *delivered*./

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428
(69) [Item number, hand: archivist]
58 [Old foliation/item number, hand: archivist]
89 [Old foliation, hand: archivist]

Right wurshipffull. and my vereye good ladye/ after my
hertiest man.^r I comende me to yo^r good ladishepe/ even so
preye yo.^w I meye be to good M^r Sentloo/ most hertelye
thanckinge yo^w boothe/ for yo^r great paynes taken wth me
at holme/ acceptinge eu^r ye thinge (thoughe it were neu^r
so rewdlye handlyde) in suche gentill sorte as ye dyde
w^{ch} doithe and will cause me to love yo^w the better whuell
I lyve/ yf I were abill to doo yo^w othere pleassure or service
and the rathere because I vnderstand/ that yo^r ladishipe
hathe not forgotten my sewte to yo.^w at yo^r goinge awaye
as speciallye to make M^r Sackvile & M^r attorneye my
ffrendes/ in the matt^r betwene M^r whalleye and me

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

w^r in he doithe me playne wronge (as I take it in my
concyence) onelye to kepe trouble & vnquyett me/ But
I trust somoche in godes helpe/ and partlye by yo^r ~
ladishipes good meanes/ and contynewance of yo^r goodnes
towards me/ that he shall not ou^r throwe me in my rightiose
cause/ and touchinge suche cominication. as was betwene
vs at holme/ yf yo^r ladishipe. & the gentillwoman yo^r
doughto^r / lyke o^r boye vppon sight/ aswell. as I & my wife
lyke the yonge gentillwomman/ I will not shrinke one
worde. ffrome y^t I said or promysed/ by the grace of gode
who preserve yo^r ladishipe/ and my m^r yo^r husbnde
longe together/ in wealthe. healthe and prosperytie. to
his pleasure. and yo^r gentill hertes desyer/ ffrome my
pover ^{^house at^} woodhouse. the iiijth of november .1561:

by the
rewde hastie hande. of yo^r goode ladishipes. assuredlye
allwaye to comaunde/

George. pierponnte. K.

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