

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 080 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=080>)

From: Gilbert Talbot (Court at Greenwich);

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: 28 June 1574

Summary: Gilbert Talbot writes to his stepmother and mother-in-law, Bess (countess of Shrewsbury), with news from the court: how 'the queen stirs little abroad', of a 'proclamation of apparel' and a rumour he has heard that his father, George, sixth earl of Shrewsbury (Bess's husband), is sick again, which has caused Gilbert to be 'somewhat troubled'. He sends 'hearty commendations' from Lady Frances Cobham, who thinks Bess her 'dearest friend'.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (107)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: papered seal, embossed with the Talbot dog passant (for the earls of Shrewsbury, a play on the family name Talbot) Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - tuck and fold

Hands: Gilbert Talbot | 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>)

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

People Associated with Letter 080: Gilbert Talbot

Gilbert Talbot (1552-1616) was the son of George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, and his first wife Gertrude (née Manners; d.1566). Gilbert was the second son but as his older brother Frances died in 1582, Gilbert succeeded to the earldom and became seventh earl of Shrewsbury after his father died on 18 November 1590. After his father's marriage to Bess (and to serve their interests), on 9 February 1568 Gilbert was married to Bess's daughter from her second marriage, Mary (née Cavendish). That is to say, Gilbert was married to his step-sister, at which point Bess became both his step-mother and mother-in-law. (At the same time, his sister Grace was married to Bess's eldest son Henry.) Gilbert and Mary were known for living large and eventually relations between Gilbert and his father Shrewsbury deteriorated over what Shrewsbury saw as his son and daughter-in-law's careless spending and the resultant debt. Gilbert also became notorious for his quarrelsome disposition. His relationship with his father suffered further damage when he accused him of siding with his wife Bess during their marriage breakdown. After his father's death he became engaged in litigation with Bess over the will (a legal battle which Bess won). Then, in 1594, he challenged his brother, Edward Talbot, to a duel amidst allegations of poisoning. These and other feuds were often long-lasting and expensive and left Gilbert with many enemies and debts. Gilbert had five children with Mary. His two sons, George and John, died in infancy and therefore his three daughters became joint heirs to their father's titles and great estate: Mary Herbert, countess of Pembroke (d. 1650), Elizabeth Grey, countess of Kent (1582-1651) and Aletheia Howard, countess of Arundel (b. After 1582, d. 1654).

Other letters associated with Gilbert Talbot:

- 4 November 1570 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=171>)
- 14 May 1575 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=81>)
- [October 1575?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=218>)
- 13 October 1575 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=217>)
- 20 February 1575/6 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=165>)
- 28 May 1576 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=82>)
- [July 1577?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=84>)
- 1 August 1577 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=85>)
- [30 June 1578?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=83>)
- 13 February 1578/9 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=166>)
- 28 February 1578/9 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=174>)
- 11 September 1580 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=154>)
- 31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)
- 31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=227>)

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

[19 September 1583?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=86>)

[February 1589] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=87>)

1 July 1589 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=88>)

28 February [1597/8?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=187>)

[November 1604] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=177>)

15 January [1606] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=180>)

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

People Associated with Letter 080: 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 Court at Greenwich

25 Jun 1577 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=172>)

Normalised view of Letter 080

To my Lady

I receaved a lettre from my Lorde since this lettre was sealed & then I had no tyme by this messenger to Wryte agane vnto your Ladyship which came in a comfortable season vnto me.

My moste humble duty remembred vnto your good Ladyship

To fulfyll your Ladyship's commandement, & in discharge of my duty by wryting rather then for any matter of importaunce that I can learne, I herewith troble your Ladyship her majestie styrreth litell abrode, and since the stay of the navy to sea, here hathe bene all thinges very quiet, and almoste no other taulke but of this Late proclamation for apparell, which is thought shall be very severely executed, both here at the cowrte, & at London. I haue wrytten to my Lorde of the brute yat is here of his beyng sick agayne, which I nothing doubte, but yat it is vtterly vntrew, howbeit because I never harde from my Lord nor your Ladyship since I came vp, I can not chuse but be sumwhat troubled, & yet I consyder the like hathe bene often reported moste falcely and withoute cause, as I beseche god this be./

my Lady cobbam asketh daly how your Ladyship dothe, and yesterday prayed me, the next tyme I wryt to doe her very hartie commendacions vnto your Ladyship saynge openly she remayneth vnto your Ladyship as she was wonte, as vnto her deereste frend: my Lady Lenox hathe not bene at the cowrte since I came./

on Wednesday next I truste (god willing) to goe hence towarde Goderydge, and shortely after to be at sheffield. And so moste humbly craving your Ladyship's blessing with my wonted prayer for your honor and moste perfite helth Lonng to continew

from the cowrte at Grenewidg this xxviiijth Iune. 1574 Your Ladyship's most humble and obedient sun:

Gilbert Talbott

Diplomatic view of Letter 080

[Address Leaf]

To my Lady

§

I receaved ^{^^}lettre from my Lorde since this
lettre was sealed & then I had no tyme by this
messenger to Wryte agane vnto yo^r La.
w^{ch} came in a comfortable season vnto me.

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(107) [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

165 [Old foliation, hand: archivist]

My moste humble duty remembred vnto yo^r good La.

To fulfill yo^r La. commandement, & in discharge of my duty
by wryting rather then for any matter of importaunⁿce that I
can learne, I herewth troble yo^r La. her ma.^{tie} styrreth litell
abrode, and since the stay of the navy to sea, here hathe bene
all thinges very quiet, and almoste no other taulke but
of this Late proclamation for apparell, w^{ch} is thought shall be
very severely executed, both here at the cowrte, & at London.
I haue wrytten to my Lorde of the brute y^t is here of his
beyng sick agayne, w^{ch} I nothing doubt, but y^t it is vtterly
vntrew, howbeit because I never harde from my L. nor
yo^r La. since I came vp, I can not chuse but be
sumwhat troubled, & yet I consyder the like hathe bene
often reported moste falcely and withoute cause, as I beseche
god this be./

my Lady cobbam asketh daly how yo^r La. dothe, and

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

yesterday prayed me, the next tyme I wy wryt to doe
her very hartie commendacions vnto yo^r La. saynge openly
she remayneth vnto yo^r La. as she was wonte, as vnto her
deereste frend: my La. Lenox hathe not bene at the
cowrte since I came./

on Wednesday next I truste (god willing) to goe hence towarde
Goderydge, and shortely after to be at sheffield. And so moste humbly craving
yo^r La. blessing wth my wonted prayer for yo^r honor and moste perfite helth Lonng^e ^{^to continew^}

from the cowrte at Grenewidg this xxvijth Iune. 1574
Yo^r La. most humble and obedient sun:

Gilbert Talbott
§

Version: 1.0