

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 082 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=082>)

From: Gilbert Talbot (Wingfield);

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: 28 May 1576

Summary: Gilbert Talbot writes to his stepmother and mother-in-law, Bess (countess of Shrewsbury), that her husband (also Gilbert's father), George, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, is at Wingfield and that Gilbert's wife, Mary (née Cavendish; Bess's daughter) and their children are well. Otherwise, 'all things are so well and quiet that truly I know not anything wherewith to enlarge this letter'.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (109)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: Seal intact - no. Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - slit and band

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 082: 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>)
- 28 June 1574 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=80>)
- 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>)
- [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 082: 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 Wingfield

28 Jun [1568?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=64>)

[1569?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=67>)

6 Oct 1585 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=152>)

6 Oct 1587 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=156>)

5 Nov 1588 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=37>)

22 Apr 1589 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=38>)

11 Apr 1591 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=159>)

Normalised view of Letter 082

To my Lady.

My duty moste humbly Remembred Right honorable and my singuler good Lady I hope your Ladyship will houlde me excused rather in wrytinge altho I know nothyng worthy advertisinge, then is by salence I should neclect my duty. my Lord god be thanked is very well, and is presently here at Wynkefylde but returneth agayne to morow to sheffeld, where also your Ladyship's tale fellow george, his moother and bebbas dothe well. All thynges are so well and quieat that truly (as I haue sayde) I know not any thyng wherwith to enlarge this letter. The rather for yat I wrot[e]... passyng ij or iij dayes synce to your Ladyship and was then dryven [to] sende my letter to my Aunte knyveton for yat my selfe ... not of any messenger to carry hit, so yat vnle[ss]... happ she knew how to convey the same. I stande ... of the tyme of [your Ladyship's] receyte therof. ... your Ladyship of your blessyng to vs your ... named in this lettre, moste humbly cravyng pardone ... the shortnes therof. And praynge to god for your .../> Lonng continuance in all honour moste perfyte healthe ... happines in all thynges. I moste humbly take my lea[ve]... Wynkefylde, this xxvijth of may .1576.

Your Ladyship's moste obedient and very Lovinge sunne

Gilbert Talbott

Diplomatic view of Letter 082

[Address Leaf]

To my Lady.

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(109) [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

157 [Old foliation, hand: archivist]

My duty moste humbly Remembred R. honorable and my *singuler* good La.

I hope yo^r La. will houlde me excused rather in wrytinge
altho I know nothyng worthy advertisinge, then is by salence

I should neclect my duty. my L. god be thanked is
very well, and is presently here at Wynkefylde but ~

returneth agayne to morow to sheffeld, where also yo^r
La. tale fellow george, his moother and bebbas dothe
well. All thynges are so well and quieat that

truly (as I ^{haue} sayde) I know not any thyng wherwith to
enlarge this letter. The rather for y^t I wrot.....

passyng ij or iij dayes synce to yo^r La. and was ^{then} dryven ...
sende my letter to my Aunte knyveton for y^t my selfe ...

not of any messenger to carry hit, so y^t vnle.....

happ she knew how to conveye the same. I stande ...

of the tyme of ... receyte therof. ...

[*deletion*] yo^r La. of yo^r blessyng to vs ~~nam~~ yo^r ...

named in this *lettre*, moste humbly cravyng pardone ...

the shortnes therof. And praynge to god for yo^r .../>

Lonng continuance in all *honour* moste perfyte healthe ...

happines in all thynges. I moste humbly take my lea.....

Wynkefylde, this xxvijth of may .1576.

Yo^r La. moste obedient and

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

very Lovinge sunne

§

[significant space]

Gilbert Talbott

§

Version: 1.0