

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 111 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=111>)

From: Bess of Hardwick;

To: Sir John Thynne, Senior;

Date: [February 1558]

Summary: Bess (widow of Sir William Cavendish) writes to Sir John Thynne regarding a bill against her and others currently in parliament, asking him to come to London speedily to help prevent its passing. Letter ID 211 is a copy of this.

Archive: Longleat House, Thynne Papers, TH/VOL/III/9

Delivery status: from Bess, sent

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

Hands: Bess of Hardwick | unknown scribe | 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 111: 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.

People Associated with Letter 111: Sir John Thynne, Senior

Sir John Thynne (1512/13-1580), was the eldest son of Thomas Thynne and his wife, Margaret (née Eynns). He entered the service of Edward Seymour, Viscount Beauchamp, in 1536 and served as his steward until 1552. Thynne also became a member of the Mercers' Company in London and allied himself with the most powerful mercer family by his marriage to Christian, daughter of Sir Richard Gresham. He married for a second time in 1566 or 1567 - to Dorothy Wroughton - and had a number of children with both wives. Thynne's connections brought him wealth, which enabled him to commence what he is perhaps best known for - his building projects, namely Longleat House in Wiltshire (one of the most important examples of Tudor architecture). Bess was directly influenced by Thynne in her own building projects, evidenced by her correspondence with him.

Other letters associated with Sir John Thynne, Senior:

15 March [1550s?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=200>)

31 March [1550s] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=198>)

25 February 1558 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=112>)

25 April 1560 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=113>)

27 August 1567 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=114>)

Normalised view of Letter 111

Too the Ryghte worchouppulle syre Iohen thynne knyghte with spede and all posybell delygence

1557 from my lady Cavendysshe

Syr I am now dreuen to craue your helpe I haue defaryed the tyme of my sendynge to you for that I haue welhopyed tyll now of late that I shulde haue hade no ocaseon at thys presente to haue trobelled you but now so yt ys that ther ys abyll yn the parlamente howse agenste me. yt ys aganarall byll and dothe towche many. and yt passe yt wyll not only ondo me and my poore chyldery[n] but agreat number of hotheres yt hathe bene twyse rede yn the lordes howse and yt shalbe brought yn agayne of monday or tewyesday. so that yt ys thoughte yt wylbe wedynnesday or thourysday or yt be brought yn to the lowar howse. yf yt wolde plese you to be here at that tyme I shulde thynke my selfe mouste bowden to you. and thought I be nowayes habyll to recompence you yt dewrynge my lyffe I wyll neuer be forgotfoulle. the tyme ys so shorte that I wolde not thus bouldely haue sente for you onles you myght haue had more tyme, to haue prepared your selfe yn. but that mayster marche wylled me yn any wysse to yntrete you to come. whyche ys more then becomyth me. allthynges consedered. I trouste I shall haue agreat sorte of frendes. yt wolde I trouste yf you wyll take the paynes to come I shall haue many more by your meanes then. by agreat sorte of hothers. and so I wyll take my leue praynge you to bare with my rewde later yn consederynge what atrobeled ys habyll to do

your pore frende for euer as I am bowden

E Cauendysshe

yf you be here of fryday you shall stande me yn great stede

Diplomatic view of Letter 111

[Address Leaf]

Too the Ryghte
worchoupfulle syre
Iohen thynne
knyghte
w^t spede and all
posybell delygence

155 8 7
from my lady
Cavendysshe

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

9 [Old foliation, hand: archivist]
Cavendish 1559

(Bess
of
Hard
wicke) [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]
^{^bare^} [(above the line), hand: archivist]

Syr I am now dreuen to craue your helpe
I haue defaryed the tyme of my
sendynge to you for that I haue
welhopyed tyll now of late that I
shulde haue hade no ocasyon at thys
presente to haue trobellede ^{^you but now^} so yt ys
that ther ys abyll yn the
parlamente howse agenste me. yt
ys aganarall byll and dothe towche
many. and yt passe yt wyll not
only ondo me and my poore chyldery...
but agreat number of hotheres

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

yt hathe bene twyse rede yn the
lordes howse and ~~th~~ yt shalbe
brought yn agayne of monday or
tewyesday. so that yt ys thoughte
yt wylbe ~~m~~ wedynnesday or ^{^hourysday^} ~~tewyesday~~
or yt be brought yn to the lowar
howse. ~~so that~~ yf yt wolde plese
you to be here at that tyme I
shulde thynke my selfe mouste
bowden to you. and thought I be
nowayes habyll to recompence you
yt dewrynge my lyffe I wyll neuer
be forgotfoulle. the tyme ys so shorte
that I wolde not thus bouldely
haue sente for you onles you myght
haue ^{^had^} more ~~m~~ore tyme, to haue
~~m~~ore prepared your selfe yn. but
that mayster marche wylled me
yn any wysse to yntrete you

[page break]

to come. whyche ys more then becomyth
me. allthynges consedered. I trouste I
shall haue agreat sorte of frendes. yt
wolde I trouste yf you wyll take
the paynes to come I shall
haue many more by your
meanes then. by agreat sorte
of hothers. and so I wyll take
my leue praynge you to bare
w^t my rewde later ~~ane yn com~~
yn consederynge what atrobeled
ys habyll to do

your pore frende
for euer as I am
bowden

E Cauendysssh

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

yf you be here of fryday
you shall stande me yn
great stede

[Overleaf]

[Overleaf: Notes]

9x [Old foliation, hand: archivist]

Version: 1.0