

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 205 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=205>)

From: Unknown correspondent (Stalye);

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

Date: 3 August [1580s?]

Summary: An unidentified author writes to Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury), offering her 'better pennyworth of my land than any other shall obtain at my hands', but admitting 'we are not likely to agree for this bargain'. The writer also refers to the execution of a writ for Master Nedham, hoping it will not be hindered by 'this disagreement between your Ladyship and myself'.

Archive: Chatsworth House, Devonshire MSS, H/143/7 (HL/2)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: Seal intact - no. Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - unsecured

Hands: unknown scribe | unknown correspondent |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 205: Unknown correspondent

null

Other letters associated with Unknown correspondent:

22 October 1564 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=62>)

[December?] 1573 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=143>)

[1578] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=138>)

21 May 1591 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=215>)

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People Associated with Letter 205: 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>)
- [1574?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=41>)
- 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 205

To the righte honorable my verie good Ladye the countisse of Shrewsburie at Hardwick this

Righte honourable Ladie. As I haue sithens occasion hath offered bene redie to shewe my poore affectionate goodwill to your Ladyship soe doe I in all dutie continue the same. I meane in offeringe your Ladyship better pennyworth of my lande then any other shall obteyne at my handes yf therfore it please your good Ladyship to accepte it. I desire therof to be resolved, that as I am willinge to loose in respecte of your Ladyship's favoure I maie not for that be too muche hyndered. ffor I assure your Ladyship by the creditt of a poore gente that I haue bene delte withall for the bargayne sithens my departure frome your Ladyship by those that are bothe able and willinge, and this in dutie and to continue your Ladyship's favoure doe I signifie. And not to flatter my selfe that with this colour I maye drawe your Ladyship (whome I knowe to be wise) to a greater matter then is alredie offered vnlesse you canne better resolue of the wothe of thinge. onlie I desire that your Ladyship maye gayne by me. And this I intreate (my good Ladyship) maie suffise to shewe my poore thankfulnessse for all your honorable favours, and that when it shalbe to late for your Ladyship to haue what I am willinge, I maie be then excused by this offer. And although wee are not liklie to agree for this bargaine, yet lett me intreate soe much favoure of your Ladyship as to speake to master Candyshe to execute the writt for master Nedham which I deliuered hym/ which I knowe he maie easelie doe, if this disagremente betwene your Ladyship and my selfe doe nott hinder it, which I hope shall not. (And I humblie intreat it maye not) for it will muche hynder me and not benyfitt hym. I am inforced vpon speciaall occasions to retorne to London verie shortlie, yf therfore it please your Ladyship to commaunde me oughte, ether here or there, I am in all readines to performe my beste service. I wilbe at my Cosyn Mundaye his howsse on fridaie nexte whether your Ladyship maie sende if there be occasion And soe humblie take my leave wishinge all helth and hapinesse to your good Ladyship ffrome Stalye this thirde of Auguste

your Ladyship's moste redie ...

Willi[iam?] ...

Diplomatic view of Letter 205

[Address Leaf]

To the right honorable my
verie good Ladye the countisse
of Shrewsburie at Hardwick
this
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[Letter Text]

Righte ho: Ladie. As I haue sithens occasion hath offered bene redie to shewe my poore affectionate goodwill to yo^r La: soe doe I in all dutie continue the same. I meane in offeringe yo^r La: better pennyworth of my lande then any other shall obteyne at my handes yf therfore it please yo^r good La: to accepte it. I desire therof to be resolved, that as I am willinge to loose in respecte of yo^r La: favoure I maie not for that be too muche hyndered. ffor I assure yo^r La: by the creditt of a poore gente that I haue bene delte wth all for the bargayne sithens my departure frome yo^r La: by those that are bothe able and willinge, and this in dutie and to continue yo^r La: favoure doe I signifie. And not to flatter my selfe that wth this colo^r I maye drawe yo^r La: (whome I knowe to be wise) to a greater matter then is alredie offered vnlesse you canne better resolute of the wothe of thinge. onlie I desire that yo^r La: maye gayne by me. And this I intreate (my good La:) maie suffise to shewe my poore thankfulness for all yo^r honorable favours, and that when it shalbe to late for yo^r La: to haue what I am willinge, I maie be then excused by this offer. And although wee are not liklie to agree for this bargaine, yet lett me intreate soe much favoure of yo^r La: as to speake to m^r Candyshe to execute the writt for m^r Nedham w^{ch} I deliuered hym/ w^{ch} I knowe he maie easelie doe, if this disagreeunte betwene yo^r La: and my selfe doe nott hinder ^{it}^, w^{ch} I hope shall not. (And I humblie intreat it maye not) for it will muche hynder me and not benyfitt hym. I am inforced vpon speciall occasions to retorne to London verie shortlie, yf therfore it please yo^r La: to commaunde me oughte, ether here or there, I am in all readines

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to *performe* my beste service. I wilbe at my Cosyn Mundaye his
howsse on fridaie nexte whether yo^r La: maie sende if there be occasion
And soe humblie take my leave wishinge all helth and hapinesse to
yo^r good La. ffrome Stalye this thirde of Auguste

[significant space]

yo^r La: moste redie ...

Willi... ..

Version: 1.0