

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 226 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=226>)

From: Henry Cavendish (Padua, Italy);

To: Bess of Hardwick; George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury;

Date: 4 November 1570

Summary: Henry Cavendish writes to his mother, Bess (countess of Shrewsbury), and her husband, George, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, from Padua, with a report of he and his brother-in-law Gilbert Talbot's travels in Europe; asking to 'know your honours' pleasures, either for our further travel, abode here, or return'.

Archive: Arundel Castle, Autograph Letters 1585-1617, No 83

Delivery status: to Bess and Shrewsbury, sent

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

Hands: Henry Cavendish | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 226: Henry Cavendish

Henry Cavendish (1550-1616) was Bess's eldest son and heir from her marriage with Sir William Cavendish (d.1557). Following his mother Bess's marriage to George, sixth earl of Shrewsbury (and to serve their interests), on 9 February 1568 Henry was married to the earl's daughter from his previous marriage, Grace (née Talbot). That is to say, Henry was married to his step-sister, at which point the earl became both his step-father and father-in-law. (At the same time, his sister Mary was married to the earl's second son Gilbert.) At the time of the marriage, Grace was only eight years old, and eighteen-year-old Henry was immediately sent on a tour of Europe, from which he did not return until 1572. The marriage was not a success on any level: the couple never produced a child and Henry was notorious for his adulterous affairs, numerous illegitimate children, financial debts and, in April 1605, for openly calling his wife a 'harlot'. A glimpse of these ongoing difficulties can be found in the letter from Edward Talbot to Bess in 1604 (ID 063). Henry undertook a number of expeditions and journeys during his life, and his trip to Constantinople in 1589 is recorded in the memoir of his servant Fox and mentioned in ID 008. Henry regularly served as MP and sheriff for Derbyshire, yet he was troublesome as a son and subject of England. He was poor with money, failed in his military ventures and, to Bess's shame, was involved in a plot to liberate his niece, Arbella Stuart, from Bess's care at Hardwick Hall in December 1602. Bess eventually disinherited him in her will.

Other letters associated with Henry Cavendish:

[c. 1570] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=9>)

6 November [c. 1585] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=10>)

6 December 1605 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=207>)

31 December 1605 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=11>)

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People Associated with Letter 226: 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.

People Associated with Letter 226: George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury

George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury (c.1522-90), was the eldest and only surviving son of Francis Talbot, fifth earl of Shrewsbury (1500-60), and his first wife, Mary (d.1538). In 1538, at the age of sixteen, he took up the title of Lord Talbot, until he succeeded to the earldom after his father's death twenty-two years later. In 1539 he married his first wife, Gertrude (née Manners; d.1566/7), with whom he had seven children: four daughters and three sons. Early on he acquired a number of honours stemming from his family's well-established prominence in the north: knight bachelor (1547), member of the council of the north (1549), knight of the Garter (1561), and lord lieutenant of Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (1565). Following the death of his first wife, he married Bess, then the widow of William St Loe (c.1520-65?), in 1567. At this point Shrewsbury was one of the wealthiest men in England, derived from his estates and also business adventuring in farming, shipping, coal-mining, glassworks and lead extraction and production. Soon after his marriage to Bess, however, he was appointed keeper of Mary Queen of Scots, a custodianship he would hold from 1569-84. Shrewsbury prided himself on his loyalty to Elizabeth I, but he soon found her reluctant to provide sufficient diet money to keep Mary and her retinue. This, in addition to the monies needed for expensive building projects (at Worksop and Chatsworth), and his eldest son Gilbert's debts led to serious financial anxiety for Shrewsbury. Furthermore, he was forced to remain with Mary at all times and was therefore losing his place at court. As Shrewsbury's stresses grew and he became increasingly irascible, his marriage with Bess broke down spectacularly amid quarrelling to do with family finances and the allocation of estates. Scandal and mutual bad-mouthing soon became very public and the queen herself intervened, eventually dictating that Shrewsbury pay Bess a regular income (from 1587), while the two lived apart. Shrewsbury was an ill man for many years and suffered with a severe rheumatic condition, what he referred to as 'gout', which contributed to his terrible handwriting. He died in the company of his mistress, Elinor Bretton, at Sheffield Manor, on 18 November 1590, after being administered a mercury cure. His son Gilbert Talbot succeeded him as the seventh earl of Shrewsbury.

Other letters associated with George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury:

- 28 June [1568?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=64>)
- [December 1568] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=65>)
- 13 December [1568] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=66>)
- [1569?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=67>)
- [1570s?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=184>)
- [c. 1570] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=9>)
- [1570] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=178>)
- [1570s] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=203>)
- [c. 1570] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=68>)

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4 November 1570 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=171>)
[c. 1571] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=70>)
[c. 1571] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=69>)
[1574?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=72>)
[1574?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=71>)
8 August 1574 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=73>)
[c. 1575?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=76>)
[c. 1575] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=75>)
[1575-7] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=245>)
7 June 1575 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=74>)
June 19 [c. 1575?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=77>)
20 February 1575/6 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=165>)
19 November [1576?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=115>)
[1577] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=183>)
[1577] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=182>)
18 May [1577?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=109>)
4 June 1577 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=221>)
25 June 1577 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=172>)
14 May 1578 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=188>)
[30 June 1578?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=83>)
2 August 1578 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=197>)
28 December 1578 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=193>)
13 February 1578/9 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=166>)
28 February 1578/9 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=174>)
22 June 1579 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=189>)
17 January 1579/80 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=190>)
13 May 1580 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=194>)
21 June 1580 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=78>)
11 September 1580 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=154>)
10 October 1580 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=79>)
8 February 1581/2 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=195>)
4 August 1584 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=119>)
26 August [1584] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=116>)

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14 October [1585] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=229>)

23 October 1585 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=117>)

9 June 1586 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=176>)

4 August 1586 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=202>)

[April 1587] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=186>)

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Other letters associated with Padua, Italy

4 Nov 1570 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=171>)

Normalised view of Letter 226

To my Lorde and my Lady geue thes.

Pleaseth yt your honores tunderstand that synce our last lettars to you, whych we sent from Spyres we haue traueled thorough the cuntry of Swyceland into Italy whear for the shorte tyme of our trauel we haue seen many goodly Cittyes, as Myllan, from whence we traueled to Pauia, and so to Genua: and from that Cytty dyrected our iourney to Venyce, betwyxt with (sic) tow townes lyeth the greatest bredthe of al Italy, and tooke thes famous Cyttyes in our waye Fortona, Placentia, Parma, Mantua, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, to whych towne we came the ix of October, whear after we had rested tyl the xxvijth of the same moneth we went to see Venyce, whych doonne we returned agayne to Padua whear we remayne tyl we knowe your honoures pleasures, eyther for our farther trauel, aboode hear, or returne: whych your Honours' myndes to vs once knowne we shal accordyng to our dewtyes very wyllingly dooe any of thes. what we haue seen in thys iourney and the decryption of the townes to the best of our poure, with eych dayes trauel (accordyng to your honors commaundements) would we haue now sent wrytten in bookes, but that at thys present we had not fully fynyshe them and so ar constrayned to let them staye tyl the next post. Thus most humbly crauyng your Honours' daly blessinges I end beshechyng god longe to to contynew your honors in perfect health and great prosperytye. From Padua the iiijth of Nouember.

Your honors obedient sonne

Henry. Cauendishe.

Diplomatic view of Letter 226

[Address Leaf]

[Address Leaf: Notes]

Written probably in 1578, when Cavendish was abroad. See Lodge, Illustrations II. 191. [Later editorial note, hand: archivist] Nov 4, 1578 [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To my Lorde and my Lady
geue thes.

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

14 [Old foliation/item number, hand: archivist]
83 [Item number, hand: archivist]

Pleaseth yt your honores tunderstand that synce our last lettars to you, whych we sent from Spyres we haue traueled thorough the cuntry of Swycerland into Italy whear for the shorte tyme of our trauel we haue seen many goodly Cittyes, as Myllan, from whence we traueled to Pauia, and so to Genua: and from that Cytty dyirected our iourney to Venyce, betwyxt wth (sic) tow townes lyeth the greatest bredthe of al Italy, and tooke thes famous Cyttyes in our waye Fortona, Placentia, Parma, Mantua, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, to whych towne we came the ix of October, whear after we had rested tyl the xxvijth of the same moneth we went to see Venyce, whych doonne we returned agayne to Padua whear we remayne tyl we knowe farthe your honoures pleasures, eyther for our farther trauel, aboode hear, or returne: whych your .H. myndes to vs once knowne we shal accordynge to our dewtyes very wyllyngly dooe any of thes. what we haue seen in thys iourney and the decryption of the townes to the best of our poure, with eych dayes trauel (accordynge to your honors commaundements) would we haue now sent wrytten in bookes, but that at thys present we had not fully fynshed them and so ar constrayned to let them staye tyl the next post. Thus most humbly crauyng your .H. daly blessynges I end beshechyng god longe to contynue your honors in perfect health and great prosperytye. From Padua the iiijth of Nouember. ~ ~

[significant space]

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Your honors obedient sonne

Henry. Cauendishe.

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