

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 227 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=227>)

From: Bess of Hardwick (Sheffield, Yorkshire);

To: Gilbert Talbot; Master Clarke; William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire;

Date: 31 January 1580/1

Summary: Bess (countess of Shrewsbury) writes a letter to her stepson and son-in-law, Gilbert Talbot, her son William Cavendish and one 'master Clarke', touching their 'petition for the further increase' of her youngest son Charles Cavendish's living allowance, and negotiations with Sir Thomas Kitson regarding the marriage of Charles and Kitson's daughter Margaret. Bess encloses another letter which Gilbert is to show to Sir Thomas Cornwallis.

Archive: Arundel Castle, Autograph Letters 1585-1617, No 89

Delivery status: from Bess, sent

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

Hands: unknown scribe | Gilbert Talbot | archivist | Bess of Hardwick |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 227: 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 227: 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>)
- 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>)

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[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>)

People Associated with Letter 227: Master Clarke

null

Other letters associated with Master Clarke:

31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)

People Associated with Letter 227: William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire

William Cavendish, first earl of Devonshire (1551-1626), was the second son of Bess and her second husband, Sir William Cavendish (1508-1557). Upon Bess's marriage to George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, William and his brother Charles (also Cavendish) were promised sums when they turned twenty-one - a promise that would later be revisited as a major source of disagreement between Shrewsbury and Bess. William married Anne Keighley in 1581, with whom he had three sons and three daughters. During the feud between Bess and Shrewsbury in the 1580s, William sided clearly with his mother and on one occasion stood armed and ready to defend Chatsworth from one of Shrewsbury's raids. Especially in contrast to her great disappointment with her eldest son, Henry Cavendish, Bess greatly favoured William and he inherited most of her property and land when she died on 13 February 1608. William gained prominence following the accession of James I (in 1603) and was elevated to the peerage as Baron Cavendish of Hardwick in 1605, and then earl of Devonshire in 1618. He managed his money and lands very well and left his son, also William, a great inheritance.

Other letters associated with William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire:

31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)

9 August 1593 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=108>)

[c. 1600] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=22>)

12 November 1600 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=20>)

4 July 1604 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=21>)

23 April 1605 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=23>)

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Other letters associated with Sheffield, Yorkshire

- 27 Aug 1567 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=114>)
- 3 May 1571 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=29>)
- 8 Aug 1574 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=73>)
- 7 Jun 1575 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=74>)
- 19 Jun [c.1575?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=77>)
- [Oct 1575?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=218>)
- 13 Oct 1575 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=217>)
- 29 Mar 1576 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=103>)
- 27 Jun [1576?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=110>)
- 18 May [1577?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=109>)
- 1 Aug 1577 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=85>)
- 17 Mar 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=120>)
- 14 May 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=188>)
- 29 Dec 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=123>)
- 17 Jan 1580 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=190>)
- 13 May 1580 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=194>)
- 21 Jun 1580 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=78>)
- 31 Jan 1581 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)
- 28 Nov 1581 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=104>)
- 28 Jan 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=144>)
- 28 Jan 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=162>)
- 8 Feb 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=195>)
- 6 May 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=146>)
- 6 May 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=145>)
- 10 Jun 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=105>)
- 24 Nov [1582?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=204>)

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7 Feb 1583 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=148>)

4 Aug 1584 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=119>)

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

19 Dec 1590 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=231>)

14 Apr [1600?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=2>)

Normalised view of Letter 227

To my Lovinge sonne Gilbert Talbott/ Will Cavendyshe, and my cosyn Clarke.

charles

From my Lady to my brother William Cavendyshe Master clarke and my selfe touchynge my brother Charles his marryage. Laste. January 1580

I have received your letter, lyke very wellof your spedy proceding, and thanke yow hartely for the paines. My answer is noated partyculerly in the margenes of the artycles agreed vpon, wher I fynd some very streite demening/ to which noates, I refer yow for further acquyntance with my mynde in suche behalf. Touching your peticon for further increase of Charles Cavendyshe present livinge, I saye and am suer, that foure hundrethe poundes a yeare is, as large a proporcon as eny Erle allowethe his eldest sonne during his owne lyfte: and he knowethe treble more than his allowance heretofore, besydes my departing with two thowsand poundes/ the one wherof, I could wyshe yf possible it might be compast/ that the younge cople should enioye/ the other at Sir Thomas kydstone and my Ladyes dispose./ Besydes it may be thought reason they should also presently departe with some thing in present towards their mayntenance and iiCli a yeare with as little as can be required respecting all thinges.

The possibilitety is good/ yet may Sir Thomas kydston have heires made of his body/ and therefore the lesse are, so great demaundes to be stode vpon. for the v. thowsand poundes contayned in the artycles to be bestowed of land and the somme convayed to Charles, which with the former Somme will make seven thousand, is so great a Somme as I know not which way to turne me for discharge of so muche, being farr vnable by reason than for Charles advancement I have alredey of late tyme desbursed all my money/ yet seing yow have entred into the matter and so farr to purpose, rather than it should breake I will make over vnto him, or sell for his further preferment some landes which stand still as my owne state./ I am willinge to promis and performe that after my deathe, he shall have assured to him eyther in money or land to the valew of v thowsandes poundes/ and yearely as I live, care shalbe had therin. But to depart with so muche presently, or in short tyme, that can I never doe except I should vtterly spoyle myself. To conclude I would not for eny thing have it breake, thoughe beyond measure (as I alredey strayne myself) in performing so much as I am content to yeeld vnto/ and me thinkes it is against reason yf they stand vpon all the artycles set downe, that they should have me so strictly enter into bonde/ Wher I graunt to eny thinge I am content to assure it so suffyciently as they will. and rather than it should not take place I will give my worde for the rest as well for the

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inrese of his living, as is sett downe as for the v. thowsand poundes which god willing I will as duly obsarve and parforme as my bonde/ I pray yow all three bring theis cheefe pointes lowar or as lowe as possiblye yow can/ What ever yow conclude vpon I will see performed/ and pray yow all enter into bonde for Charles, and / I will see that he shall save yow harmeles/ in eny wyse lett it be so followed without delay as the maryage may be before lent/ yt will prevent the enemyes workinge daunger/ Yf they will not be removed from the v thowsandes poundes, than perswade for longe day. Sonne Gilbert this other letter which I have writt to yourself yow may shew it to Sir Thomas Cornewallys and I pray yow delyver therwith vnto him, so great thanks & good wordes as yow can devyse.

Thus with my harty commendacions to yourself and my cosin Clarke, I beseche god to blesse yow and william Cavendyshe. Sheffield the last of January 1580

your louynge mother

EShrouesbury

Diplomatic view of Letter 227

[Address Leaf]

To my Lovinge sonne Gilbert
Talbot/ Will Cavendyshe,
and my cosyn Clarke.

charles

From my Lady to my
brother W:^m Cavendyshe
M^r clarke and my selfe
touchynge my brother
Charles his marryage.
Laste. Ja: 1580

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

89 [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

I have rec. yo^r letter, lyke very wellof yo^r spedy *proceeding*, and thanke yow hartely for the paines. My answer is is noated partyculerly in the margenes of the artycles agreed vppon, wher I fynd some very streite demening/ to w^{ch} noates, I refer yow for further acqyuntance wth my mynde in suche behalf. Touching yo^r peticon for further increase of Charles Cavendyshe p^r sent livinge, I saye and am suer, that foure hundrethe poundes a yeare is, as large a *proporcon* as eny Erle allowethe his eldest sonne during his owne lyfte: and he knowethe treble more than his allowance heretofore, besydes my departing wth two thowsand poundes/ the one wherof, I could wyshe yf possible it might be *compast*/ that the younge cople should enioye/ the other at S^r Thomas kydstone and my Ladyes dispose./ Besydes it may be thought reason they should ^{also} p^r sently departe wth some thing in p^r sent towards their mayntenance and ii^{Cl} a yeare wth

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as little as can be required respecting all thinges.

The possibilitety is good/ yet may S^r Thomas kydston have heires made of his body/ and therfore the lesse are, so great demaundes to be [deletion] stooed vpon. for the v. thowsand poundes contayned in the artycles to be bestowed of land and the somme convayed to Charles, w^{ch} wth the former Somme will make seven thousand, is so great a Somme as I know not w^{ch} way to turne me for discharge of so mucche, being farr vnable by reason ^{^than^} for Charles advancement I have alredy of late tyme desbursed all my money/ yet seing yow have entred into the matt^r and so farr to purpose, rather than it should breake I will make over vnto him, or sell for his further p^r ferment some landes w^{ch} stand still as my owne state./ I am willinge to promis and performe that aft^r my deathe, he shall have assured to him eyther in money or land to the valew of v thowsandes poundes/ and yearely as I live, care shalbe had therin. But to depart wth so mucche p^r sently, or in short tyme, that can I never doe except I should vtterly spoyle myself. To conclude I would not for eny thing have it breake, thoughe beyond measure (as I alredy strayne myself) in performing so much as I am content to yeeld vnto/ and me thinkes it is against reason yf they stand vpon all the artycles set downe, that they should have me so strictly enter into bonde/ Wher I graunt to eny thinge I am content to assure it so suffyciently as they will. and rath^r than it should not take place I will give my worde for the rest ^{^as} well for the increse of his living, as is sett downe as for the v. thousand poundes[^] w^{ch} god willing I will as duly obsarve and parforme as my bonde/ I pray yow all three bring this cheefe pointes t^o lowar or as lowe as possibley yow can/ What ever yow conclude vpon I will see performed/ and pray yow all enter into bonde for Charles, and ^{^[deletion]^} [deletion]/ I will see that he shall save yow harmeles/ in eny wyse lett it be so followed wth out delay as the maryage may be before lent/ yt will p^r vent the enemyes workinge daunger/ Yf they will not be removed from the v^m- v thowsandes poundes, than perswade for marvelous longe day. Sonne Gilbert this other lette^r w^{ch} I have writt to yo^r self

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yow may shew it to S^r Thomas Cornewallys wth-all and I pray yow delyver
therwth vnto him, so [^]great thankes & [^] good wordes as yow can devyse.

Thus wth my harty commendacions to yo^f self and my cosin Clarke, I beseche god to blesse
yow and
william Cavendyshe. Sheffield the last of January 1580

your louynge mother

EShrouesbury

Version: 1.0