

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 228 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)

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 to her stepson and son-in-law, Gilbert Talbot, her son William Cavendish and one 'Master Clarke', regarding arrangement of a marriage between her youngest son Charles Cavendish and Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Kitson; asking him to thank Sir Thomas Cornwallis for his dealings in the matter; and hoping that the marriage will be 'dispatched before Lent so the enemy will be prevented from working damage'.

Archive: Arundel Castle, Autograph Letters 1585-1617, No 90

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 228: 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 228: 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=227>)

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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 228: Master Clarke

null

Other letters associated with Master Clarke:

31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=227>)

People Associated with Letter 228: 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=227>)

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=227>)
- 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 228

To my loving sonnes Gilbert Talbott William Cavendyshe and my cosyn Clark

charles

vCli presently. vCli terio Trimtertes. 1581 vC in ffesto tour pro x. 1581 vltimo december 1582.
vCl

lettres from my Lord & Lady at my beyng at London in february & marche. 1582

My Ladyship's lettre to my brother William Cavendyshe master Clarke & my selfe concernynge
my brother Charles Cavendish's marryage vltimo January 1590

Sonne Gilbert: I have receaved the artycles sett downe in behalf of a maryage betwixt Charles my sonne and Sir Thomas kidstons doughter, which truly in dyvers pointes are too obstricte, and the same I have noated in the margent of the booke with my answer and mynde to every suche partycule whervnto I refer yow/ I pray yow delyver to good Sir Thomas Cornewallys most hartly salutacions from me: with thanks for his paynes taken in the matter and willingnes to have it a matche/ which with all my hart I wishe and will strayne myself to the vttermost, and farr more than shall stand with my ease, bothe for the vertuous demeanure of the younge gentlewoman herself/ and that my sonne is to ioyn with so good frendes/ Yet my hope is that Sir Thomas Cornewallys/ will thinke my offer to the artycles very large and sufficyent/ and be a meane that no further bonde be required, than conveniently I may in reason graunt vnto/ Looke what I have sett downe that shalbe assured in what stet they hold best/ and yf further increase for Charles livinge be stood vpon/ as also eny great Somme to be bestowed of land and assured to Charles/ that my worde may take place, which I will not faile to performe. And further declare, that as he hathe wysely done in forbearing to wryte vnto me for the respecte alledged/ so do I now forbear in lyke manner to troble him with eny letter from me/ onely making earnest request for his favorable contynuance in concluding the maryage that yt may be dyspatchte before Lent/ and so the enemie wilbe prevented from wurking damage/ My hope is, it will not be taken in so ill degree as is expected/ What soever chaunce lett him rest assured, that I and all the frendes I am able to make shalbe imployde to labor the cause. and thus having referred my mynd vnto yow/ I beseche god to blesse yow. Sheffield the last of January 1580

your louynge mother

EShrouesbury

Diplomatic view of Letter 228

[Address Leaf]

[Address Leaf: Notes]

Jan 31 1580-1. [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To my loving sonnes
Gilbert Talbott
William Cavendyshe
and my cosyn Clark

charles

v.^{Clⁱ} presently.

v.^{Clⁱ} terio Trimertes. 1581

v.^C in ffesto tour *pro* x. 1581

vltimo dec. 1582. v^{Clⁱ}

lettres from my L. [^]& Lady[^] at my beyng
at London in february & marche. 1582

My La. *lettre* to my brother

Charles [^]William[^] Cavendyshe m^r

Clarke & my selfe

concernyng my brother

Charles Cavendish's marryage

vltimo *January* 1590

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

90 [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

Sonne Gilbert: I have receaved the artycles sett downe in behalf of a
maryage betwixt Charles my sonne and S^r Thomas kidstons dought^r,
w^{ch} truly in dyvers pointes are too obstricte, and the same I have

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noated in the margent of the booke wth my answer and mynde to every
suche partycule whervnto I refer yow/ I pray yow delyv^r
to ^{^good^} S^r Thomas Cornewallys most hartly salutacions from me: wth thanks
for his paynes taken in the matt^r and willingnes to have it a
matche/ w^{ch} wth all my hart I wishe and will strayne myself
to the vttermost, and farr more than shall stand wth my ease,
bothe for the vertuous demeanure of the younge gentlewoman
herself/ and that my sonne is to ioyne wth so good frendes/
Yet my hope is that S^r Thomas Cornewallys/ will thinke my
offer to the artycles very large and sufficyent/ and be a
meane that no further bonde be required, than conveniently
I may in reason graunt vnto/ Looke what I have sett downe
that shalbe assured in what stet they hold best/ and yf
further increase for Charles livinge be stood vpon/ as also
eny great Somme to be bestowed of land and assured to
Charles/ that my worde may take place, w^{ch} I will
not faile to *performe*. And furth^r declare,
that as he hath wysely done in forbearing to wryte
vnto me for the respecte alledged/ so do I now forbear
in lyke mann^r to troble him wth eny letter from me/ onely
making earnest request for his favorable contynuance in
concluding the maryage that yt may be dyspatchte
before Lent/ and so the enemie wilbe p^r vented from
wurking damage/ My hope is, it will not be taken
in so ill degree as is expected/ What soever chaunce
lett him rest assured, that I and all the frendes I am
able to make shalbe imployde to labor the cause. and
thus having referred my mynd vnto yow/ I besече
god to blesse yow. Sheffield the last of January
1580

your louynge
mother

EShrouesbury

Version: 1.0