

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 059 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=059>)

From: Sir William St. Loe (Windsor, Berkshire);

To: Bess of Hardwick (Chatsworth House, Derbyshire);

Date: 4 September [1560?]

Summary: William St. Loe writes to his wife, Bess (Lady St. Loe), from Windsor asking after her well-being, as he has not heard from her for some time. Relates news of her friends at court; and how he gave his horse to the queen when she desired it of him. Also, the almoner (of Eton) has said that 'no gentleman's children in England shall be better welcome or better looked unto than our boys'.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (75)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: papered seal, embossed Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - tuck and fold

Hands: Sir William St. Loe | Bess of Hardwick | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 059: Sir William St. Loe

Sir William St Loe (c.1520-65?) was Bess's third husband and the two were probably married in 1558 or 1559, right around the time Elizabeth I succeeded to the crown. In that same year, St Loe was appointed captain of the guard to the queen. St Loe seems to have had genuine affection for Bess; however, due to his duties at court (the queen did not like him being away), the two spent most of their marriage apart, he in London and she at Chatsworth (where she undertook considerable building works). Bess's marriage to St Loe undoubtedly brought her closer to the queen and she was named a gentlewoman of the queen's privy chamber in 1559. The marriage also improved her finances and when St Loe died Bess inherited most of his estate.

Other letters associated with Sir William St. Loe:

12 October [c. 1560] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=60>)

24 October [c. 1560] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=61>)

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People Associated with Letter 059: 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 Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

- 15 Mar [1550s?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=200>)
- 31 Mar [1550s?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=198>)
- 13 Apr [c.1550] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=13>)
- 14 Nov [1552] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=99>)
- 13 Jan [c.1560] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=47>)
- 12 Oct [c.1560] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=60>)
- 24 Oct [c.1560] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=61>)
- 18 May 1562 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=55>)
- 20 Nov [1565?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=17>)
- 8 Dec [c.1565] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=28>)
- 26 Feb [1566?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=18>)
- Jun [1568?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=157>)
- 28 Jun [1568?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=64>)
- [1570s?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=210>)
- [1570] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=178>)
- 28 Jul 1570 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=25>)
- 31 Aug 1570 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=170>)
- 21 Sep 1571 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=26>)
- [1577] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=182>)
- 2 Aug 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=197>)
- 23 Sep 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=121>)
- 22 Jun 1579 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=189>)
- 15 Jul 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=175>)
- 8 Apr 1594 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=236>)
- 8 May 1594 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=102>)

Normalised view of Letter 059

To my owne dear wyff att chatsworth delyver thys///

and avnde

My owne, more dearar to me then I am to my seylff, thow schaltte vnderstande thatt ytt ys no smale fear nor greyff vnto me off thye well doying, then I showlde presentlye se what I dowght, nott onelye for thatt my contynvall nyghtlye dreams besyds my absens hath trobelyd me bvtt also cheyflye for that hvghe alsope kan nott sarttefye me in whatt estate thow nor thyne ys, whome I tendar more then I do Wyllyam Seyntlo therefore I praye the as thow doest love me lett me schortlye heare from the for the qvyetyng off my vnqvyetyd mynde howe thy owne swete seylff wyth all thyne doeth trvstyng schortlye to be emongst yow/ all thye frendes here salvteth the/ harrye skyppwyth desyred me to make the and no other pryve that he ys svre off maestres neyll wyth whome he ys by thys tyme/ he hath sentt x thowsand thanckes vnto thye seylff for the same sche hath openyd all thyngs vnto hym/ to morowe syr rycharde sackfelde and I ryde to london to gyther, apon satvrdaye nextt we retrrne hyther agayne/ the qvone yesterdaye her owne seylff rydeng apon the waye craved my horse, vnto home I gave hym resevyng openlye for the same manye goodlye wordes/ thvs wysschyng my seylff wyth thye seylff I bedde the my owne good sarvantte and cheyff oversear off my worcks moste harttelye farewell by thyne who ys holye and onelye thyne, ye and for all thyne whyls lyff lastyth/ from Wynsor the fowerth off septembar/

By the ryghtt worschypfvll good maestar and moste honest hvsbande maestar Syr

Wyllyam Seyntlo/ esqvyer/

commendde me to my my mother and to all mye brothers and systars there nott forgettyng francke wyth the reste off mye chyldren and thyne/ the amnar salvtethe the and sayeth no lenthlemens chyldren in Inghland schalbe be bettar welcvm nor bettar loked vnto then owre boyes/ ones agayne farewell good honest swet

my seylff or greyves schalbe the nextt messynger/

Diplomatic view of Letter 059

[Address Leaf]

[Address Leaf: Notes]

S^r W^m Saintlow Capt of ye Guard to Q Eliz^h
& Chief Butler of England, who mar^d Eliz
(D^{er} of John Hardwick of Hardwick esq & Widow
of S^r W^m Cavendish of Chatsworth, & after
=w^{ds} Countess of Shrewsbury.

Curious [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To my owne dear
wyff att chatsworth be
delyver thys///

and
avnde

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428
(75) [Item number, hand: archivist]
40 [Old foliation/item number, hand: archivist]
21 [Old foliation, hand: archivist]

My owne, more dearar to me then I am to my seylff, thow schalte
vnderstande thatt ytt ys no smale fear nor greyff vnto me off thye
well doying, then I showlde presentlye se what I dowght, nott
onelye for th thatt my contynvall nyghtlye dreams besyds
my absens hath trobelyd me besydes bvt also cheyflye for that
hvghe alsope kan nott sarttefye me in whatt estate thow nor
thyne ys, whome I tendar more then I do Wyllyam Seyntlo
therefore I praye the as thow doest love me lett me schortlye
heare from the for the qvyetyng off my vnqvyetyd mynde howe
thy owne swete seylff wyth all thyne doeth trvstyng
schortlye to be emongst yow/ all thye frendes here be salvteth

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the/ harrye skipwyth desyred me to make the and no other
pryve that he ys svre off maestres neyll wyth whome
he ys by thys th tyme/ and ^{^he hath sentt^} x thowsand thanes
thanckes vnto thye seylff for the same sche hath openyd all
thyngs vnto hym/ to morowe syr rychard sackfelde
and I ryde to london to gyther, apon satvrdaye ^{^nextt^} we
retvrne hyther agayne/ the qvne yesterdaye her
owne seylff rydeng apon the waye ^{erred} ^{^craved^} my horse, vnto
home I gave hym resevyng openlye for the same
manye goodlye wordes/ thvs wysschyng my seylff
wyth thye seylff I bedde the my owne good sarvantte and
cheyff oversear off my worcks moste harttelye farewell
by thyne who ys holye and onelye thyne, ye and for all
thyne whyls lyff lastyth/ from Wynsor the fowerth off
septembar/

By the ryghtt worschypfvll
good maestar and moste honest
hvsbande maestar Syr

Wyllyam Seyntlo/ esqvyer/

commendde me to my my mother and to all
mye brothers and systars there nott
forgettyng francke wyth the reste
~~wyth the rest~~ off mye chyldren and
thyne/ the amnar salvtethe the and
sayeth no Ientlemens chyldren in England schalbe be bettar welcvm nor
bettar loked vnto then owre boyes/ ones agayne farewell good honest swet

my seylff or greyves schalbe the nextt messynger/

[Overleaf]

[Overleaf: Notes]

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

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[Next Page: Notes]

1/2 [Old foliation/item number, hand: archivist]

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