

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

**Letter ID: 105 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=105>)**

From: Bess of Hardwick (Sheffield, Yorkshire);

To: Lord Thomas Paget;

Date: 10 June 1582

Summary: Bess (countess of Shrewsbury) writes to Lord Thomas Paget to request his help in dealings to do with the settlement of lands on her son Charles Cavendish, following his marriage to Margaret Kitson.

Archive: Keele University Library, Paget Papers, MS 8, ff. 55- (D603K/1/8/38)

Delivery status: from Bess, sent

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

Hands: unknown scribe | archivist | Bess of Hardwick |

Version: 1.0

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## People Associated with Letter 105: 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 105: Lord Thomas Paget

Thomas Paget, fourth Baron Paget (c.1544-1590), was a Roman Catholic layman and exile (from 1583 until his death).

Other letters associated with Lord Thomas Paget:

[1570s?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=210>)

29 March 1576 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=103>)

28 November 1581 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=104>)

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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>)
- 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>)
- 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 105

To the right honorab[le] my very good Lord the Lord Pagett./

Contesse of shrewesburye 1582

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My very good Lord, yt is not vnknown vnto you howe vpon the marriage passed betwixt my sonne Charles and Sir thomas Kytsons doughter certein landes are to be assured vpon bothe parties which we all desyre maye be perfected this next terme, to which ende Sir Thomas & my Lady & Master thomas Kitson haue knowledged a fyne or Recoverie, and because my counsell so advised for thavoidinge all doubttes, I procured comission to take like knoweledge of master Iarves Kytson, to whom also Sir thomas wryt in that behalfe; but he havinge annuytie owt of parcell of the landes conteyned in the fyne refused therfore to knowledge the same vntill he might speake with you and Sir thomas Kytson because he wold not do any thinge vnadvisedly and promised to be at London vpon Satterdaye next to do that in reason ys convenyent,. but because I am doubtfull he shall not fynd Sir thomas there, to whom yf he shuld travaill into the countrey he can not after, knowledge the Recoverie in due tyme to be recorded this next terme (as we desyre yt maye) and for that I heare he relieth moche vpon your lordship I am to desyre your good perswasion to hym to passe the same at his comynge to London without further delaye, And for any Impeachment of his annuytie by force of that recoverie, I assure you I will see hym acquitted theref, and that he shall haue as good securitie for the same as he had before./ I litle doubte of any assurans or title he hath in the landes because Sir thomas ascerteyneth me he hathe non: yet for satisfyenge my fantesie, & advoydinge all scruples considered of, by my frendes & councell, I am very desyrous he shuld knowledge yt presently vpon his repayre to London, whervnto I truste by your Lordship's good meanes he wilbe induced, So shall I still taste more of your frendly good will towards me, wherof I thinck my selfe assured as you shalbe of myne in what I maye And so with my right hartie comendacions, wishe your lordship as well to do as my selfe./ Sheffield this xth of Iune 1582./

your Lordship's assuryed louynge frend

EShrouesbury

## Diplomatic view of Letter 105

[Address Leaf]

To the right honorab...  
my very good Lord  
the Lo: Pagett./

Contesse of shrewesburye 1582

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[Letter Text]

### [Letter Text: Notes]

55 [Old foliation, hand: archivist]

PAG VIII/38 [Item number, hand: archivist]

My very good Lord, yt is not vnknownen vnto yo<sup>u</sup> howe vpon  
the marriage passed betwixt my sonne Charles and  
S<sup>r</sup> thomas Kytsons doughter certain landes are to be assured  
vpon bothe parties w<sup>ch</sup> we all desyre maye be perfected this  
next terme, to w<sup>ch</sup> ende S<sup>r</sup> Thomas & my Lady & M<sup>r</sup>  
thomas Kitson haue knowledged a <sup>^fyne or^</sup> Recoverie, and because  
my counsell so advised for thavoidinge all doubttes, I *procured*  
comission to take like knoweledge of m<sup>r</sup> Iarves Kytson, to  
whom also S<sup>r</sup> thomas wryt in that behalfe; but he  
havinge annuytie owt of *parcell* of the landes conteyned in  
the *Recoverie* <sup>^fyne^</sup> refused therefore to knowledge the same  
vntill he might speake w<sup>th</sup> yo<sup>u</sup> and S<sup>r</sup> thomas Kytson ~~in~~  
because he wold not do any thinge vnadvisedly and *promised*  
to be at London vpon Satterdaye next to do that in reason  
ys convenyent,. but because I am doubtfull he shall not  
fynd S<sup>r</sup> thomas there, to whom yf he shuld travaill into the  
countray he can not after, knowledge the Recoverie in due  
tyme to be recorded this next terme (as we desyre yt maye)  
and for <sup>^that^</sup> I heare he relieth moche vpon yo<sup>r</sup> lo: I am to desyre  
yor good *perswasion* to hym to passe the same at his comyng to  
London w<sup>th</sup> out further delaye, And for any Impeachment of



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his annuytie by force of that recoverie, I assure yo<sup>u</sup> I will see hym acquitted theref, and that he shall haue as good securitie for the same as he had before./ I litle doubte of any assurans or title he hath in the landes because S<sup>r</sup> thomas ascerteyneth me he hath non: yet for satisfyenge my fantesie fantesie, & advoydinge all scruples considered of, by my frendes & councell, I am very desyrous he shuld knowledge yt presently vpon his repayre to London, whervnto I truste by yo<sup>r</sup> Lo: good meanes he wilbe induced, So shall I still taste more of yo<sup>r</sup> frendly good will towardes me, wherof I thinck my selfe assured as yo<sup>u</sup> shalbe of myne in what I maye And so w<sup>th</sup> my right hartie comendacions, wishe yo<sup>r</sup> lo: as well to do as my selfe./ Sheffeld this x<sup>th</sup> of Iune 1582./

your .L. assuryed  
louynge frend

EShrouesbury

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56 [Old foliation, hand: archivist]

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