

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 014 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=014>)

From: George Chaworth ([The Royal Court, London?]);

To: Bess of Hardwick (Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire);

Date: 13 February 1606/7

Summary: George Chaworth writes to Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury), his 'protectress and defender', asking her to ask his uncle, George Chaworth, to speak to another uncle, Henry Chaworth, on his behalf: George fears that his uncle Henry will settle the family estate without considering him.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (15)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

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

Hands: George Chaworth | archivist |

Version: 1.0

Copyright Information

All material is made available free of charge for individual, non-commercial use only. The copyright and other intellectual property rights in the transcribed letter text, metadata about the letters and the design of the letter display are owned by the University of Glasgow.

You are permitted to access, print and download letters from this site on the following conditions:

- use of all material on this site is for information and for non-commercial or your own personal use only; any copies of these pages saved to disk or to any other storage medium may only be used for subsequent viewing purposes or to print extracts for non-commercial or your own personal use.
- the content must not be modified in any way.
- any use of the material for a permitted purpose must be accompanied by a full source citation.

No part of this site may be reproduced or stored in any other web site or included in any public or private electronic retrieval system or service without the University of Glasgow's prior written permission. Commercial exploitation of the transcribed letters, including use by radio or television programme makers and examination boards, is prohibited without licence from the University of Glasgow.

Further information on copyright and citation can be found at:- (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/background.jsp?id=171>)

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

People Associated with Letter 014: George Chaworth

George Chaworth of Annesley (d.1639) was one of Bess's kinsmen and her legal adviser. He married Mary Kniveton and was elevated to the peerage as Viscount Chaworth of Armagh in 1628.

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

People Associated with Letter 014: 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

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

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.

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Other letters associated with Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire

- 1 Dec [c.1564] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=30>)
- 20 Jan [c.1565] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=31>)
- [1574?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=41>)
- 3 Aug [1580s?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=205>)
- 2 Aug 1584 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=150>)
- 4 Aug 1584 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=119>)
- 18 Feb [1591?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=233>)
- 21 Sep 1592 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=163>)
- 11 Mar 1593 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=160>)
- 19 Sep 1594 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=1>)
- 20 May 1595 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=124>)
- 27 Feb 1596 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=16>)
- 11 Aug 1597 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=46>)
- 28 Feb [1598?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=187>)
- [c.1600] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=7>)
- 2 Jun 1600 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=125>)
- 6 Oct 1600 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=126>)
- 28 Apr 1601 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=127>)
- 21 Dec 1602 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=44>)
- 9 Jan 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=128>)
- 18 Jan 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=139>)
- 29 Jan 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=129>)
- 2 Feb 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=130>)
- 6 Feb 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=131>)
- 21 Feb 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=132>)
- 3 Mar 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=134>)

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

- 10 Mar 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=135>)
- 18 Apr 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=140>)
- 31 Jan 1604 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=161>)
- 12 May 1604 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=63>)
- 18 Jun 1604 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=45>)
- 4 Jul 1604 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=21>)
- 16 Dec 1605 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=242>)
- 15 Jan [1606] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=180>)
- 7 Mar 1606 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=49>)
- 25 May [1607] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=3>)
- 22 Jun 1607 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=34>)
- 27 Jun [1607] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=4>)
- 30 Nov 1607 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=179>)
- 31 Dec 1607 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=35>)

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Other letters associated with [The Royal Court, London?]

- 8 Mar [1560?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=100>)
- 13 Dec [1568] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=66>)
- 20 Feb 1576 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=165>)
- 19 Nov [1576?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=115>)
- 28 Feb 1579 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=174>)
- 23 Mar 1591 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=24>)
- 10 Feb 1606 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=48>)
- 7 Mar 1606 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=49>)
- 22 Jun 1607 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=34>)

Normalised view of Letter 014

To the Right honorable my espetiall good Ladye the Countess dowager of Shrewsberye giue this./.. at Hardwick --./=.

Most honorable Madam/ These are to desyre your honors pardon for the last letters I sent you, because, I made that speede with them (that they myght giue your honor the fyrst intelligens of the Arraignmentes) that I Could not in so short tyme make them fytt for your honors readeing or heareing. As I have allwaye deservedly esteemed your honor my best Patron - so I must now in all humiletye beseech your honors ever graciousnes to shew yt selfe espetially to me in protecting me - In vutsafing to laye your honors Command on my vunkell George Chaworth to stand my frend, & speake for me to my vunkell Henerye Chaworth, for that now he ys determined to settell his estate, he would please to favor me as Sir George Chaworth sayd, and not take awaye the goodnes of his will to me: but rather to mend then Cross yt (as I heare he goeth about/ I have written to master Timothey to informe your honor what my vunkell Henerye meaneth to doe against me, and whearein my vunkell George maye pleasure me, for I assure your hono[r] my vunkell Henerye was accustomed and I beleeve will yet be wholly guided by him - therefore I must buld vppon your honors effecting his love for me/ -- I beseech your honor pardon this exceeding rudenes and bouldnes in me - I doubt yt wilbe much offensive, for that I knowe your honor hath many wayghtye and worthye affayres of your owne that be over troblesome vnto your honor: but I beseech your honor impute this to the best, which ys that I flye vnto your honor as to my protectress and defender - And so I beseech God to send your honor freedome from all trobles, & to heape vppon you manye yearss of Ioye and blesednes - from the Court this 13th of ffebruarye 1606

Your honors most bounden

George Chaworth

Diplomatic view of Letter 014

[Address Leaf]

To the R. honorable my espetiall
good Ladye the Countess dowager
of Shrewsberye giue this./..
at Hardwick --./=.
§

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(15) [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

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

Most honorable Madam/ These are to desyre yo^r honors *pardon* for the last letters I sent you, because, I made that speede with them (that they myght giue yo^r ho^r the fyrst intelligens of the Arraignmentes) that I Could not in so short tyme make them fytt for your honors readeing or heareing. As I have allwaye deservedly esteemed yo^r honor my best Patron - so I must now in all humiletye beseech yo^r ho^{rs} ever graciousnes to shew yt selfe yow espetially to me in *protecting* me - In vutsafing to laye your honors *Command* on my vunkell George Chaworth to stand my frend, & speake for me to my vunkell Henerye Chaworth, for that now he ys determind to settell his estate, he would please to favor me as S^r George Chaworth sayd, and not take awaye the goodnes of his will to me: but rather to mend then Cross yt (as I heare he goeth about/ I have written to m^r Timothey to informe your honor what my vunkell Henerye meaneth to doe against me, and wherein my vunkell George maye pleasure me, for I assure yo^r hono... my vunkell Henerye was accustomed and I beleeve will yet be wholly guided by him - therefore I must buld vppon yo^r honors effecting his love for me/ -- I beseech your ho^r pardon this exceeding rudenes and bouldnes in me - I doubt yt wilbe much offen=sive, for that I knowe your ho^r hath many wayghtye and worthye

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

affayres of your owne that be over troblesome vnto yo^r honor: but I
beseech your honor impute this to the best, which ys that I flye vnto
your honor as to my *protectress* and defender - And so I beseech
God to send yo^r ho^r [*deletion*] freedome from all trobles, & to heape vppon
you manye yearss of Ioye and blesednes - from the Court this
13th of ffebruarye 1606

Your honors

[significant space]
most bounden

George Chaworth

Version: 1.0