

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 144 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=144>)

From: Bess of Hardwick (Sheffield, Yorkshire);

To: Sir Francis Walsingham;

Date: 28 January 1581/2

Summary: Bess (countess of Shrewsbury) writes to Sir Francis Walsingham following the death of her daughter Elizabeth Stuart (née Cavendish), asking him to petition the queen so that the portion (of money) previously given to Elizabeth and her daughter Arbella will now go to the latter, 'for her better education and training up in all good virtue and learning'.

Archive: The National Archives, State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth I, 12/152, f 36r-36v (item 13)

Delivery status: from Bess, sent

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

Hands: Scribe E | unknown scribe | archivist | Bess of Hardwick |

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 144: 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.

People Associated with Letter 144: Sir Francis Walsingham

Sir Francis Walsingham (c.1532-1590), was a principal secretary and an intelligencer to Elizabeth I. During the reign of Queen Mary, he lived in exile in Europe. Then, having returned to England following the accession of Elizabeth I, he married Ursula (née St Barbe; with whom he had two daughters); and backed by powerful figures at court (such as Cecil and Leicester) he was initially appointed as an ambassador to France in 1570. In 1573 he was appointed as principal secretary and a privy councillor. By the early 1580s he was one of the queen's key advisors and intimates - evidenced by her nickname for him, her 'Moor'. Walsingham is known to posterity mainly for his complex coordination of intelligence operations - most famously for the discovery of the Babington Plot in 1586, which ultimately led to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, previously held in the custodial charge of Bess and her fourth husband, George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury.

Other letters associated with Sir Francis Walsingham:

8 June 1576 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=234>)

29 December 1578 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=123>)

6 May 1582 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=146>)

6 May 1582 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=145>)

7 February 1582/3 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=148>)

6 April 1584 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=149>)

2 December 1585 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=153>)

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

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=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>)

Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

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 144

To my honorable good ffrende Sir ffrancys Walsingham Pryncipall Secretarye to her Majestie

28 January 1581 The Countesse of Shrewsbury.

Touching her daughters portion

My honorable good frende yow vnderstande by my Lord's former lettres howe it hath pleased god to take from me my daughter Lennoux to whose devyne Majestie I muste submytt my self and all myne as it pleaseth hym to dispose of vs, your wonted favour and honorable dealinge shewed to me hath made me nowe to resorte vnto yow as to my approved good frende/, my assured truste is that her Majestie of her accustomed gracious goodnes towardes me will lett the same portion It pleased her to bestowe on my daughter Lennoux and my Iuell Arbella, to goe to the child, for her better education and trayninge vpp in all good vertue and Learninge, and so she maye the soner be redye to attende on her Majestie. The Childe nowe growinge into more yeres shall stande in more nede of more seruantes and teachers, I nothinge doubt but vppon your good mediation her Majestie will thinke this portion litle inoughe for the Childe./, And thus good Master Secretarye besechinge your accustomed frendelie care to recomende this my suite and petition to her Majestie, And that yow will gyve my sonne William Cavendishe Leave to attend on yow from tyme to tyme to knowe your good pleasure I ceasse Sheffilde this xxvijth of Ianuarye/

your assuryed louyng frend

EShrouesbury

Diplomatic view of Letter 144

[Address Leaf]

[Address Leaf: Notes]

1581/2 Jan.^{ry} 28

Domestic

[Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To my honorable good
ffrende Sr ffrancys
Walsingham Pryncipall
Secretarye to her Ma^{tie}

28 January 1581

The Countesse of Shrewsbury.

Touching her daughters portion

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

13 [Item number, hand: archivist]

36 [Foliation (right-hand margin), hand: archivist]

41 [Foliation, hand: archivist]

(13.) [Item number, hand: archivist]

My honorable good frende yo^w vnderstande by my Lo: former *lettres*
howe it hathe pleased god to take from me my daughter Lennoux
to whose devyne Ma^{tie} I muste submytt my self and all myne
as it pleaseth hym to dispose of vs, yo^r wonted favo.^r and
honorable dealinge shewed to me hath made me nowe to resorte
vnto yo^w as to my approved good frende/, my assured truste is
that her Ma^{tie} of her accustomed gracious goodnes towardes
me will lett the same portion It pleased her to bestowe on my
daughter Lennoux and my Iuell Arbella, to goe [*deletion*] to the
child, for her better education and trayninge vpp in all good
vertue and Learninge, and so [*deletion*] she maye the soner be

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

redye to attende on her Ma^{tie}. The Childe nowe growinge
into more yeres shall stande in more nede of the more seruantes
and teachers, I nothinge doutt but vppon the ^{^your^} good mediation
of yo^w - her Ma^{tie} will thinke this portion litle inoughe for
the Childe./, And thus good M^r Secretarye besechinge yo^r
accustomed frendlie care to recomende this my suite and
peticion to her Ma^{tie}, And that yo^w will gyve my sonne
William Cavendishe Leave to attend on yo^w from tyme to tyme
to knowe yo^r good pleasure I ceasse Sheffielde this xxviiith
of Ianuarye/

your assuryed louyng
frend

EShrouesbury

[Overleaf]

[Overleaf: Notes]

42 [Foliation, hand: archivist]

Version: 1.0