

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

**Letter ID: 177** (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=177>)

From: Bess of Hardwick; Gilbert Talbot;

To: Sir Fulke Greville;

Date: [November 1604]

Summary: A fragment of a draft letter from Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury) and her stepson and son-in-law, Gilbert (seventh earl of Shrewsbury), to Sir Fulke Greville, concerning debts owed to him. They offer to repay him by selling land if necessary.

Archive: Lambeth Palace Library, Talbot Papers, MS 3203, fol. 267

Delivery status: from Bess, not sent (i.e. a draft or contemporary copy)

Letter features: Seal intact - no. Ribbon/floss – no.

Hands: unknown scribe | 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 177: 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

## People Associated with Letter 177: 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=228>)

# Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

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

[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>)

15 January [1606] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=180>)

## **People Associated with Letter 177: Sir Fulke Greville**

Sir Fulke Greville, first Baron Brooke of Beauchamps Court (1554–1628), was a courtier and author. He was a friend of the poet, Sir Philip Sidney; servant to Elizabeth I; and councillor to King James I.

## Normalised view of Letter 177

receue annsure that it was required that you would haue taken the sume you then receud and the rest of the fines you might than haue had for you to descharg so much of the prencipall and fath full promes mad that you shold 100 and 200l at atime receue the wholl in trest with in so short time as was tould you which might be dune with out my gret inconueneance to me what the some was my audet boke will show for the fines was mad oute to descharg my det to you and you were further tould vppon your delays that my occacions was such as would not sufer mony to ly by me the conclusion was you toke the sume you liked vppon arrearege now you are requitted sence you will perticuler is this that you will cast it you had then receued the mony in that sort and intrest as it was ofered with that you haue receued sence what would haue ben due at this day touching my lady deglis det as you call it I thinke prencipall and cretirs was long sence descharged in your furst leter you desire your mony at such times as your occasions will sufer and seme to be troubled that you haue ben as you ... mor neglected then others who you say had taken a wors corces with for ther det to the furst I returned annsuer to desir to know what dayes with conueniency you might geue me to the end I might show you what I could doe of certaynty and if the wholl could not be satesfid in your time to geue you my fath full promes to doe it by such dayes as I would requir of you for the rest to this you only return me annsuer that at widsoure &c but that you saye is not the thing in questin betuext, &c not withstanding this is no satesfaction to my request I will doe all in my pore to prouid the whol agayns that time for you and tho I haue no hope to perform so much yet I doubt not but agaynst that time to gett a good sume which you shall not god willing fayl of and the rest I hope in resonabell time) or I will sell landes for it, to the second part of your furst leter I put you in mind of sume poyntes which as I thought might haue geuen you satesfacion that you wer not so neglected but it semes other waye I haue inquired the maner as you requir and

## Diplomatic view of Letter 177

[Letter Text]

### [Letter Text: Notes]

267 [Foliation, hand: archivist]

receue annsure that it was required that you  
would haue taken the sune you then receud  
and the rest of the fines <sup>^you might than haue had for you^</sup> ~~then mad to~~  
~~the end to descharde det to you as the~~ <sup>^to descharg so much of the^</sup>  
prencipall and fath full promes mad that  
you shold w<sup>t</sup> ~~in such short time as was~~  
~~named to you receue all intrest du w<sup>ch</sup> I~~  
might w<sup>t</sup> owt any inconueniencie pay by  
100 and 200<sup>l</sup> at atime receue the wholl  
in trest w<sup>t</sup> in so short time as was tould  
you w<sup>ch</sup> might be dune w<sup>t</sup> out my gret inconueneance <sup>^to me^</sup> what the some was my audet  
boke will show for the fines was  
mad oute to descharg my det to  
you and you were further tould <sup>^vppon your delays^</sup> that my  
occacions was such as would not sufer  
mony to ly by me the conclusion was  
you toke the sune you liked vppon arrearege  
now you are requitted sence you will  
peticuler is this that you will cast it  
you had then receued the mony in that  
sort and intrest as it was ofered w<sup>t</sup>  
~~what~~ that you haue receued sence what  
would haue ben due at this day touching my la: deglis det as you call it  
I thinke prencipall and cretirs  
was long sence discharged

[page break]

in your furst leter you desire your mony at such  
times as your occasions will sufer and seme  
to be troubled that you haue ben as you ...  
mor neglected then others who <sup>^you say^</sup> had taken a  
wors corces w<sup>t</sup> *[deletion]* <sup>^for ther det^</sup> to the furst I returned



# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

annsuer to desir to know what dayes w<sup>t</sup> any  
conueniancy you might geue me to the end  
I might show you what y<sup>ou</sup> I could doe of  
certaynty and if n<sup>o</sup>t the wholl could not be  
satesfid in [*deletion*] <sup>^your^</sup> time to geue you my  
fath full promes to doe it by such dayes  
~~after as I could be informed by~~  
~~them that let my ... I might kepe~~ <sup>^as I would requir of you for the rest^</sup>  
to this you only return me annsuer that at  
widsoure &c but that <sup>^you saye^</sup> is not the thing  
in questin betuext, &c not w<sup>t</sup> standing  
this is no satesfaction to my request I will  
doe all in my pore to prouid the whol  
agayns that time for you and tho I  
haue no hope to perform so much yet  
I doubt not but agaynst that time to  
gett a good sume w<sup>ch</sup> you shall not  
god willing fayl of and the rest I  
hope in resonabell time) or I will sell landes  
for doe it, ~~of my awnsuer of to the second~~  
~~part of your furst leter I haue as you desir~~  
~~inquired for of the~~ put you in mind of sume  
poyntes w<sup>ch</sup> as I thought might haue geuen  
you satesfacion <sup>^that you wer not so neglected^</sup> but it semes other waye I  
haue inquired the maner as you requir and

Version: 1.0