

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 020 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=020>)

From: William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire (London, Greater London);

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: 12 November 1600

Summary: William Cavendish writes to his mother, Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury), about various lawsuits in London, including those to do with 'concealments' (i.e. The unlawful withholding of land) in the Star Chamber and a suit in the Chancery between Mr. Barlow and Mr. Blunt (who 'liketh to be defended by the earl of Shrewsbury [Bess's stepson and son-in-law, Gilbert Talbot]'). The queen will be at Whitehall tomorrow and the Moscovy ambassador is expected. William also thanks Bess 'for the hands of the three little honest folks subscribed in your Ladyship's letter'.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (22)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

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

Hands: William Cavendish | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 020: William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire

William Cavendish, first earl of Devonshire (1551-1626), was the second son of Bess and her second husband, Sir William Cavendish (1508-1557). Upon Bess's marriage to George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, William and his brother Charles (also Cavendish) were promised sums when they turned twenty-one - a promise that would later be revisited as a major source of disagreement between Shrewsbury and Bess. William married Anne Keighley in 1581, with whom he had three sons and three daughters. During the feud between Bess and Shrewsbury in the 1580s, William sided clearly with his mother and on one occasion stood armed and ready to defend Chatsworth from one of Shrewsbury's raids. Especially in contrast to her great disappointment with her eldest son, Henry Cavendish, Bess greatly favoured William and he inherited most of her property and land when she died on 13 February 1608. William gained prominence following the accession of James I (in 1603) and was elevated to the peerage as Baron Cavendish of Hardwick in 1605, and then earl of Devonshire in 1618. He managed his money and lands very well and left his son, also William, a great inheritance.

Other letters associated with William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire:

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

31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)

9 August 1593 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=108>)

[c. 1600] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=22>)

4 July 1604 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=21>)

23 April 1605 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=23>)

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People Associated with Letter 020: 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 London, Greater London

- 14 Nov [1552] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=99>)
- 25 Feb 1558 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=112>)
- 24 Oct [c.1560] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=61>)
- 4 Nov 1561 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=54>)
- 14 Dec [1564] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=50>)
- [23?] Jan 1569 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=164>)
- 28 Jul 1570 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=25>)
- 31 Aug 1570 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=170>)
- 21 Sep 1571 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=26>)
- 13 Oct 1571 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=225>)
- 3 Feb 1574 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=27>)
- 9 Jul 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=191>)
- 21 May 1591 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=215>)
- [c.1600] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=22>)
- 4 Jul 1604 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=21>)
- 23 Apr 1605 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=23>)

Normalised view of Letter 020

My bounden dewtie most humbly remembred to your Ladyship &c./ This wedensday, according to ye Lordes commaundment, master Holcroft, my self, & master Sutton with our counsell, attended in the after none at the Star chamber;/ And there likewise attended kidman & Caterall. The Lordes were so busied in other matters that they cold not here any thing this day towching concelementes./ There answeere was, that when they satt next on these matters, we shold be the first dispatched There is no day now set downe, but we shall attend them, when they sitt for concelementes./ master Crompton this day moued my lord keper in the Star chamber yat whereas I and other defendantes (Crompton named none but me) haue demvrrred vppon his bill of complaynt, affirming his bill to be so friuolus & insufficient that yt deserueth no answeere, yat it wold please my lord keper to refer yt to some to consider of his bill and to make reporte to ye Courte whither there be cause to answeere yt or not; my lord keper hath referred it to ye Iudges of the circuit none can [iud]ge better of yt then my lord Anderson, ... he hath bene partly acquainted with Crompton[s] honest & good actions. So yat this m[at]ter I account ended, & I wysch yat Alwood were of the same mynd./ It is a thing materiall to be alleged against Eyre in the Chancery that he hath made a dede of gyft of all he hath; wherof I knew not, but by your Ladyships late letter by watson./ My lord keper hath not yet giuen sentence on Eyre, Blunt & Columbello, vpon Master Barloes suit in the Chauncery but as I here master Blunt doth offer master Barloe fyve hundreth poundes to be at pease with him, for yt is thought master Blunt is in danger to be greuously fined in the Star chamber for periury & forgery, yf matters be not taken vp./ master Blunt liketh to be defended by the Erle of Shrewsbury; for yat the Erle hath the land, & his father bound to master Blunt to saue him harmeless for all matters touching master Barloe or his land./ but master Blunt seing no ayd, & yat all must rest on his owne sholders, entreth into wordes of great heat ageynst them, whom heretofore he most folloed, remembreth his ill hap to be drawn into the matter of the wayres at Shelford, whereunto he sayeth he was perswaded. Before master Barloes comming vp this terme; the Erle sent for him to Shefeld to haue taken vp matters betwene master Blunt & him, but master Barloe wold not be perswaded, so as he departed from Shefeld in displeasure;/ within few dayes after, master Barloe was sent for to Shefeld ageyn; but wolde not come. my Cosin Chaworth thinketh that the Erle cannot kepe any courtes in the forest of the peak, but yt may please your Ladyship to let thinges rest till after the terme, yat your Ladyships co[un]sell may be further advised vppon the sight of ... leass/ hir ma[jestie] morrow come to whyte ha[ll] Besides the cytie, ... Iudges and Serientes are all a[ppo]ynted to attend, which vsua[lly] they doe not; it is partly do[ne], as yt is sayd in respect ... moscovy Imbassadar./ I humbly thank your Ladyship for the handes of the three litle honest folkes subscribed in your Ladyships letter, I know by Iames writing; where he lerned his skill; I besech god to bless them; & to graunt that your Ladyship may se litle ons of them all./ master Serient warburton shalbe Iudge & it is thought shall come ye circuit with my lord Anderson./ There are no leses yet made of the yorkshire landes, A great number of the tenantes haue attended here all terme & yet doe; they are vncerteyn what there dispatch wilbe And so having not further to aduertise your Ladyship I most humbly ceass, with my dayly

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prayer to ye Almightye to graunt your Ladyship long & happy health with all comfortes. most humbly beseching your Ladyships dayly blessings from London this wedensday night the xijth of November 1600

Your Ladyships

most humble & boundenn sonn

W. Cauendysshe

Diplomatic view of Letter 020

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(22) [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

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

My bounden dewtie most humbly remembered to
yo^r La^p &c./ This wedensday, according
to y^c Lordes commaundm^t, m^r Holcroft, my self,
& m^r Sutton w.th o.^r counsell, attended in the
after none at the Star chamber;/ And
there likewise attended kidman & Caterall.
The Lordes were so busied in other matters
that they cold not here any thing this day
towching concelem.^{tes} ./ There answe
was, that when they satt next on these
matters, we shold be the first dispatched
There is no day now set downe, but
we shall attend them, when they sitt for
concelem.^{tes} ./ m^r Crompton this
day moued my lo keper in the Star chamb^r
y^t whereas I and other defendantes (Crompton
named none but me) haue demvrrred vppon
his bill of complaynt, affirming his bill to
be so friuolus & insufficient ^{^that^} yt deserueth no
answere, y^t it wold please my lo keper to
refer yt to some to consider of his bill and
to make reporte to y^c Courte whither there
be cause to answe y^t or not; my lo.
keper hath referred it to y^c Iudges of the circuit
none can ...ge better of yt then my lo.
And^r son, ... he hath bene partly acquainted
wth Crompton... honest & good ~~dirr~~ actions.
So y^t this m...er I account yt ended, & I wysh
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circuit wth my lo. And^r son./ There are no ~
lesses yet made of the yorkshire landes, A great ~
number of the tenantes haue attended here all terme
& yet doe; they are vncerteyn what [deletion] there dispatch ^{^wilbe^}
And so having not further to aduertise yo^r La.^p I most
humbly ceass, wth my dayly prayer to y^e Almightye to
graunt yo^r La.^p long & happy health wth all confortes.
most humbly beseching yo^r La.^{ps} dayly blessings
from London this wedensday night the xijth of Novemb^r
1600

Yo^r Ladyships
§

[significant space]

most humble &
boundenn sonn
§

[significant space]

W. Cauendysshe

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