

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 030 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=030>)

From: James Hardwick (Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire);

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: 1 December [c. 1564]

Summary: James Hardwick writes to his sister, Bess (Lady St. Loe), a second time ('eftsones') concerning a mix-up in their letters; a recognisance; and his various ailments (haemorrhoids, headache and the effects of age). The postscript reports the marriage between Francis Willoughby (1546/7-96) and Elizabeth Littleton (d. 1595).

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (34)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

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

Hands: James Hardwick | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 030: James Hardwick

James Hardwick (1526-81) was Bess's brother. Married twice, he had only one son, John, who was illegitimate. He inherited the Hardwick estate from his father, which, in 1570, had an estimated revenue of £341. However, during his life he lost everything (due to risky speculative purchasing of Church lands on high-interest loans) and died bankrupt in the Fleet Prison. Bess purchased her brother's Hardwick lands outright in her son William's name for £9500 on 2 June 1583.

Other letters associated with James Hardwick:

20 January [c. 1565] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=31>)

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People Associated with Letter 030: 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 Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire

- 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>)
10 Mar 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=135>)

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- 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>)
- 13 Feb 1607 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=14>)
- 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>)

Normalised view of Letter 030

To my verye good ladye my lady Sentlowe geff this

good madame for that I perseue you dyd mystake my Letter do eftsones trouble you Master clerke hathe receued my Letter and also youres/ as be hys answer you maye perseve wyche I have sent you/ and ones dyd promyse my men they should have money wyth them there tarynge there whas but shorte and also ye knowe that one maye do at one tyme that he can not do at another I sende vpt shortelye one of my men so that be the frendshype of your Letters agayn I maye chause to spede/ and afore chrestemas one of the maysters of the chanserye wylbe wythe me and then I shall acknowlege a recognysance before hym as a statute at natyngham to whome Master Lek wyll have me/ I thanke good I am well amended and syns I had the emeroydes/ my pane yn my hede ys quyte gone frome/ but I fele age wher apon me for I may not abyd cold/ and thus good madame desiryng your Letter to Master clerke ... wythe my hertye commendacyons do wyshe vnto yow and all yours as vnto my selfe frome hardwycke the fyrst of december

your most lovyng brother

James Hardwycke

my coysn Wylloughbye ys maryed to master lytelltons daugheter of wocester shyre an mean gentyllman and hathe lytell past halfe to muche as the executors gave master knolles

Diplomatic view of Letter 030

[Address Leaf]

To my verye good
ladye my lady
Sentlowe geff
this

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(34) [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

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

good madame for that I *m* perseue you dyd mystake my
Letter do eftsones trouble you M^f clerke hathe receued
my Letter and also youres/ as be hys answer you
maye perseve wyche I have sent you/ and ones dyd
promyse my men they should have money wyth
them there tarynge there whas but shorte and
also ye knowe that one maye do at one
tyme that he can not do at another
I sende vpt shortelye one of my men so that
be the frendshype of your Letters agayn I
maye chause to spede/ and afore chrestemas
one of the maysters of the chanserye wylbe
wythe me and then I shall acknowlege a
recognysance before hym as a statute at
natyngham to whome M^f Lek wyll have
me/ I thanke good I am well amended
and syns I had the emeroydes/ my pane
yn my hede ys quyte gone frome/ but
I fele age wher apon me for I may
not abyd cold/ and thus good madame
desiryng your Letter to M^f clerke ... wythe
my hertye commendacyons do wyshe vnto yow

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and all yours as vnto my selfe frome
hardwycke the fyrst of december

your
most lovyng brother

James Hardwycke

§

my coysn Wylloughbye ys maryed to m^r
lytelltons daugheter of wocester shyre
an mean gentyll ^{^man^} and ^{^hathe^} lytell past halfe to
muche as the executors gave m^r knolles

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