

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 031 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=031>)

From: James Hardwick (Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire);

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: 20 January [c. 1565]

Summary: James Hardwick writes to his sister, Bess (Lady St. Loe), excusing himself for not coming to see her in person due to a painful 'cough of the lungs'; and asks her for money, offering to pay it back with interest.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (35)

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 031: 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:

1 December [c. 1564] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=30>)

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People Associated with Letter 031: 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

- 1 Dec [c.1564] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=30>)
[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 031

To my verye good ladye my ladye Sentlowe geffe thys

good madame my humble commendacyons to yor Ladyship I wold hav bene with you or now but that be reason of rowmes dystyllynge into my brest I have soche horsenes that vnethe you could here me spek/ whereapon hath folowed the coughe of the longes that hath putt me to a mervoulouse payne/ I am well amended of my horsenes but not of my cowghe specyally yn the nyght yt holdythe me sore/ and yf I take the ayre wors so lytl I cawghe vnreasonablye but as sone as the wayther ys fayr I wyll see you yf I be enye thyng next/ goodmadam/ I do nat beleev that mean your lettr I shal receve enye money of Master Clerke and streghte I beseche you yf yn eny wysse can to helpe me wyth one handrythe poundes or yf ye can nat helpe me to so muche to helpe me to fyfye poundes and ye shall have eyther my lease of hethe cote myne or els... landes I hau yn aldwecke yn morgage for the same/ suche madame yf you wylbe so good to helpe me to the some betwyxt thys and the xxvijth daye of this Ianuary I shalbe muche bounden to you for the same for if I have yt not be that daye yt wyll come to late to serve my turne thus takyng my leve and prayyng you of answeere wythe my hertye comendacyones do wyshe vnto you and all yours as vnto my selfe from hardwycke the xxth daye of thys Ianuarye

your most lovyng brother duryng my lyff

James Hardwyk

and I shalte geffe you for the Interest of the same mony what you wyll

Diplomatic view of Letter 031

[Address Leaf]

[Address Leaf: Notes]

James Hardwick ^{^Esqr^} Brother
to y^c Countess of Shrewsbury who
was then Lady Saintlow Wife of
S.^r William Seintlow Cap.^t of y^c Guard
to Q. Elizabeth. [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To my verye good
ladye my ladye
Sentlowe geffe thys
§

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428
(35) [Item number, hand: archivist]
22 [Old foliation/item number, hand: archivist]

good madame my humble commendacyons to yor Lad
I wold hav ~~wold hav~~ bene with you or now
but that be reason of rowmes dystylllynge into
my brest I have soche horsenes that vnethe you
could here me spek/ whereapon hath folowed
the coughe of the longes that hath putt me to
a mervoulouse payne/ I am well amended of my
horsenes but not of my cowghe specyally yn the
nyght yt holdythe me sore/ and yf I take the
ayre wors so lyt e I I cawghe vnreasonablye
but as sone as the wayther ys fayr I wyll see you
yf I be enye thyng next/ goodmadam/ I do
nat beleev that mean your lettr I shal receve
enye money of M^r Clerke and streghte I beseche
you yf yn eny wysse can to helpe me
wyth one handrythe poundes or yf ye can

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nat helpe [*deletion*] ^{me to} so muche to helpe me to fyfye
poundes and ye shall have eyther my lease
of hethe cote myne or els... landes I
hau yn aldwecke yn morgage for the
same/ suche madame yf you wylbe so good
to helpe me to the some betwyxt thys and
the xxvijth daye of ^{this} Ianuary I shalbe muche bounden
to you for the same for if I have yt not
be that daye yt wyll come to late to serve
my turne thus takyng my leve and prayng
you of answeyre wythe my hertye comendacyones
do wyshe vnto [*deletion*] you and all yours as vnto
my selfe from hardwycke the xxth daye of
thys Ianuarye

your most lovyng brother duryng my
lyff§

James Hardwyk
§

and I shalte geffe you for the Interest
of the same mony what you wyll

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